The Spirit of God and the Faith of Today

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RICHARD ROBERTS

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by
RICHARD ROBERTS

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" The Age of the Father," said the mediaeval mystic, " is past; the age of the Son is passing; the age of the Spirit is yet to be." It would appear from many signs, as if the cryptic prophecy were on its way to fulfilment.

E. F. Scott, in
The Spirit in the New Testament

The great mass of people were no more religious fifty years ago than they are now; but undoubtedly the few are less orthodox than they were then. On the other hand, I should say that the few are more religiously minded than they were in my youth. They are more speculative, they think more about first and last things; they are less content with the supposed certainties either of science or of religion. For them the one article in the creed which seems to gain a deeper and a fuller meaning as the others fade is, " I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life." More and more, their mind dwells on the Master's discourse with the Women of Samaria. They see the religion of the future as the religion of the spirit — not merely something vague called the Life Force, but the " Holy Spirit," compelling us in spite of everything, to think of it as holy.

J. A. Spender, in
Life, Journalism and Politics

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PREFACE

The Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit sprang from the need of explaining certain human experiences. Its origins are chiefly in the Old Testament, though it was profoundly affected in the course of its development by Hellenistic influences. Within the New Testament period, it can hardly be said that the Judaic and Hellenistic elements were satisfactorily harmonized; and in certain respects, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has in consequence always been something of a " fifth wheel " in the system of Christian theology. Not even the formulation of the Doctrine of the Trinity has enabled it to fit with comfort into the scheme of thought. But its survival in the religious mind proves that it corresponds to certain abiding features of religious experience; and some attempt should be made to restate the doctrine for these days. This little work is nothing so ambitious as an essay in restatement. It is chiefly a brief survey of that

part of the field of human experience which appears to call for the doctrine and therefore for its restatement.

The observance of the nineteen hundredth anniversary of Pentecost will do a very real service to the church of God and to the world by calling attention to this neglected field. There is little doubt that the churches of the Puritan and Evangelical traditions have allowed the conception of an active, personal Presence of God in the world to fall into relative obscurity. To be sure, they have consistently paid lip-service to it; but it has not been for a considerable time one of their controlling convictions. The evidence for this is to be found in the virtual disappearance of the festival of Pentecost from among their observances, especially on this side of the Atlantic. While the festivals of Christmas and Easter have been preserved, Pentecost, which in the tradition of the church is coequal with them in importance and sanctity, has fallen into desuetude. If the celebration of its nineteenth centenary does but restore the festival of Pentecost to its annual place in the life of these churches,

it will have conferred an incalculable blessing upon them.

But what we chiefly need is the abiding conviction of a divine Presence which is active over the whole field of human life and whose office it is to accomplish " the revealing of the sons of God." This Presence is ever at hand to help our infirmities, to reinforce our powers, to refine and sanctify our instincts, to aid our search for the good, the true and the beautiful, to kindle vision, and to bring us at last to the stature of the fullness of Christ. What I have tried to do in these pages is to show the evidence of a divine Presence in the world, the range of its operations, and the conditions (in so far as we can divine them) under which it works. If this admittedly somewhat slight and discursive treatment of so great a subject assists even a little in recalling Christian folk to serious attention to this untilled portion of their spiritual estate, the writing of it will be more than justified.

RICHARD ROBERTS

TORONTO
February 28, 1930

PART I

PENTECOST

I

The Record

In Christian tradition, the classical manifestation of the Holy Spirit is associated with the events of the feast of Pentecost after the death of Jesus. It becomes our first business then to consider the experience which befell the primitive Christian community on that day.

The record of the event is preserved in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. The critical moment of the event occupies no more than the second chapter; but the event itself must be regarded as embracing all the experiences and happenings of the time which elapsed between the day of Pentecost itself and the moment at which the high Christian tide made its first onset upon the Gentile world. All that occurred during that period must be traced to the astonishing and decisive experience in the Upper Room.

It is doubtless true that by the time the record was put in writing, certain legendary additions had fastened themselves on the story. But there is little reason to suppose that the main features of the report are not a sufficiently reliable transcript of the event. How St. Luke came by his information we do not know. It is not impossible that portions of the story were set down in writing by eyewitnesses. But we may surmise that Luke, who was a careful historian, himself gathered most of his information from among those in Jerusalem and elsewhere who remembered the stirring happenings of the time. St. Luke, however, appears on the Christian scene rather late; and by that time the experience must have been to some extent distorted in the memories of the survivors.

A great experience does not at any time lend itself to a realistic account of itself. The emotional stress foreshortens vision and consequently gives an inaccurate picture; and the passing of the years tends to aggravate the original disproportion. But there is ground for believing that St. Luke gives us a restrained and conservative

impression of the episode; and the account which he gives may be regarded as preserving the mature apostolic interpretation of the great moment.

2

The Company

Let us then go into the Upper Room and consider the company gathered there. Who are these people? They are very ordinary folk, not a superman among them, no one of outstanding intellect, no likely statesman. Even the eleven apostles, the inner circle, were so far men of no special distinction. Indeed, their story in the Gospels shows them to have been rather dull, slow in the uptake and laying a heavy tax upon the singular patience of Jesus. Evidently Jesus did not choose them for their cleverness, their public ability; yet Jesus did choose them, and he must have had good reasons for choosing them. We are not told what these reasons were; but we may at least divine one of the reasons. Jesus had said to them, " Ye are they which continued

with me in my trials." They had staying power and had proved it. They might be stupid, but they had been faithful. Jesus knew that once they had seen the point, they would stick to it, and the story St. Luke has to tell is in great part the story of how these men stuck to the point. Jesus chose them for their moral qualities, not for their intellectual capacity, or for their public gifts. He was not looking for brilliancy but for steadfastness, for men for spade work, not men for fireworks. The moral qualities of the company in the Upper Room is not without its importance for our inquiry.

They had been through a great deal in the previous weeks. During a period which must at least have covered four hundred days, many of them had sat at the feet of Jesus; and no doubt all of them had seen much of him. Eleven of them had been with him virtually all the time. They had learned much from him, but most important of all was it that they had learned to love him, and so to love him that they had given up old associations, old traditions, calling, and, in some cases, home ties in order to follow him.

Their whole life was bound up with him. He was their life, their sanctuary and their hope. Just what his intention and mission were they seem never to have quite clearly grasped; but they trusted him implicitly to lead them into some life of peace and harmony and freedom.

Then, as the result of circumstances which they only partially comprehended, Jesus was arrested by the public authorities, tried before the courts and sentenced to death and crucified under circumstances of great indignity. The light of their life went out; their joy was turned to ashes; their hope darkened into despair. They were of all men most miserable.

But three days later, there was a strange, swift reversal. From the depths of despair they were lifted up to the peak of exultation. At first, incredulous — the thing seemed too good to be true — then with dawning recognition, they realised that the Cross was not the end of the brief drama, but the end only of its first act. They found themselves in a transfigured world. For forty days, of which we have but scant record, they lived in this unexpected wonderland.

Then Jesus left them again. But this time the circumstances were very different. He was now not the fallen victim but the risen victor. They were conscious of no sorrow, no disappointment or despair. For there had been given to them a promise, the nature of which they could not divine, but which was to be fulfilled not many days hence.

Of the substantial reality of the experiences through which those people had passed I fail to see grounds for reasonable doubt. There are considerable miraculous elements in the story, to be sure, and in particular the Resurrection story. This is not the time or the place to discuss the question. But despite the difficulties of the Resurrection narrative, it seems impossible to resist the conclusion that these people had experience of Jesus in personal presence after his death, however that experience is to be explained.

In any case, it is well to remember that the only argument against the credibility of a miracle is that it never happened before, that there are no precedents for it. But in a world of life gov-

erned by a principle of evolution, and which is by that fact a world of unpredictable things, this objection has no real validity. Granted a unique concourse of circumstances, it would be rash to prophesy the event; and the presence of the personality of Jesus would make any set of circumstances unique. Be that as it may, the essential elements of the story — that Jesus was crucified and that after his crucifixion he moved again in sensible presence among his disciples and that he finally left them in a spirit of expectation — must be accepted as in substance true.

There is nothing that welds people together so soundly as a great common experience. Fellowship is born of great things seen together, done together, especially of great things suffered together. It was in the strength of such experience that this company came and held together after the departure of Jesus. There was but one thing that tempered their confidence and their great hope — the uneasy sense of being beset behind and before by a hostile world.

3

The Mind of the Company

It is worth observing that from the beginning, the company felt that it had come to stay, for one of its earliest recorded transactions was an act of organization. Even though we may be constrained not to ascribe too heavy a weight of authority to the recorded commission to a world-wide ministry in Mark 16 and Acts 1, it would be incredible that Jesus had not given them during his life with them a sense of wide and abiding vocation. That sense of vocation, and of such a vocation, they seem to have had; and as from its nature it was a vocation of propaganda, it was necessary to have a base. So they proceeded to organize themselves. At that point, it could not be a very serious or elaborate process. The center of the organization was naturally the inner circle of the twelve; and the first necessary step therefore was the filling of the place left empty by the defection and treason of Judas.

But it is significant of the spiritual immaturity of the company that they made their

choice by a method which was neither rational nor spiritual. They cast lots. Nowadays, we should have appointed a chairman, called for nominations, and proceeded to a ballot. But it does not follow that we should have done much better. The statistical method is no doubt more rational than the fortuitous. But it would be hard to prove that we ascertain the right course or make the proper choice by counting noses. The Society of Friends proceeds to its findings by a process which is called "taking the sense of the meeting," and there is no voting. It is a longer process and needs more patience than counting votes, but it is more consistent with a professed faith in spiritual guidance. And it is well to take time to make sure of the will of God.

In the event, the choice made was without significance. The lot fell upon a respectable nonentity named Matthias, of whom we hear no more. It is an interesting and perhaps a not groundless conjecture that, in the divine providence, the vacant place was later filled by a man named Paul. And if that be so, it gives us some measure of the tragedy of Judas. It was a con-

siderable place that he left to be filled. Be that as it may, it is evident that though the company in the Upper Room had a sense of important vocation, their naïve trust in chance shows them to have been spiritually very immature.

In addition to being conscious of a vocation, they were at the time in a mood of expectancy. This mood was not a vague Micawberishness, a waiting for something to turn up. It was apparently the expectation of empowerment for the task ahead of them; and they anticipated that the gift would not be long delayed. Naturally this mood would induce a certain intensity of preoccupation with the coming experience. This is a point of much importance to our study; for in other spheres than the religious it has been definitely established that intense and purposeful mental concentration upon the subject in hand is a prerequisite of clear perception, of great illumination, of plain vision.

It is also to be observed that this expectancy was not passive. It was dynamic and active. It discharged itself in prayer. These people were not merely waiting, they were seeking. They

not only stood at the door, but knocked and kept knocking until the door was opened. " They all with one accord continued in prayer."

To sum up then: in the Upper Room was a company of people bound by a great common experience into a close-knit fellowship, sharing a sense of vocation, a common expectation and a life of prayer.

4

The First Consequences of Pentecost

Then, one day, the great experience came. Of its inward nature we shall have to take such account as we may at a later point. For the present, we shall confine ourselves to its immediate consequences.

To begin with, there was a *great accession of courage*. After the Crucifixion, the disciples had gathered together behind closed doors for fear of the Jews. But now neither locks nor locksmiths could have kept them in. They were, after all, only a handful of inconsiderable folk, with no

very obvious capacity for a great work; and if they had been diffident and hesitating, who should blame them? But there was neither fear nor doubt in them as they swept the streets of Jerusalem with an irresistible eloquence; and least of all in Peter whose dismal failure in another crisis might not have encouraged us to expect so flaming and fearless an atonement. But neither he nor his friends were afraid of anything that day.

Then we observe that there was a *unique power of utterance* among them, so that a large number of those who heard them were pricked to the heart and accepted the gospel. Before this time, there is no evidence that any of the company, even of the twelve, were unusually gifted in speech. Peter stood out among them in the Upper Room by virtue of a certain natural force which put him in a place of leadership. There is, however, no previous indication of his having possessed a gift of sustained and moving utterance.

But on this occasion he proved himself capable not merely of swaying opinion but of that more difficult and more important thing, of con-

straining men to a verdict which they must register with their very lives. It is no little thing to exercise power in speech upon an individual; but on this occasion it seems to have produced decisive effect in a considerable number of people. This utterance must be distinguished carefully from the " tongues " to which allusion is made in the narrative.

Further, it is evident from Peter's speech on the day of Pentecost and in later utterances, that through this experience they had reached a *clear perception of a gospel,* involving a firm, even if partial, apprehension of what Jesus meant to the world. The whole impression that Jesus had made upon them, all that he had said to them, their direct experience of him, were fused into a coherent word; and with this word they went out to challenge the world.

To be sure, there are grounds for doubting whether we have Peter's very words in the recorded Pentecost discourse. It is not likely that any one set it down in writing at the time. None the less, it is a somewhat gratuitous assumption that the discourse is an invention of St. Luke's.

It is more probable that he worked over some reminiscences that he had collected from among those who were present at the time and gave him the main drift of Peter's discourse, perhaps giving it a continuity and a finished form which it did not originally possess. It is inconceivable that St. Luke could have invented the very subtle and powerful argument of the Hellenist Stephen before the Sanhedrim, which possesses a character all its own; and there is no reason to suppose that either the Pentecost discourse or any of the other major utterances in the early part of the Acts were any more products of St. Luke's imagination than the speech of Stephen.

In all these speeches there is a conspicuous similarity of intention. They all turn upon or lead up to the Crucifixion and the Resurrection; and the argument concludes in an appeal that men should accept this Jesus who was crucified as Christ and Lord. The Christian gospel was indeed not fully formulated until a greater and a no less consecrated mind brought its immense powers to the task. But the germs of it are here, and these germs were born in the experience of

the Upper Room. Thoughts and experiences, longings and emotions that lay about in their minds without order were focused upon a single point and took their proper place in a single intelligible testimony; and in a sense a new thing was born into the world. The Master who had been the light of their life they now saw to be the light of Israel and the light of the world. With a sure, clear insistence they proclaimed Jesus of Nazareth to be the Christ of God and the Savior of men.

There was still another result, though its implications were not clearly grasped at the moment. *They discovered themselves to be a church.* We have observed their fellowship in the Upper Room; but at Pentecost there was such an enhancement of that fellowship as transfigured it into a new thing. Before, they had a comradeship; now, they became a living unity. Of this new solidarity, one piece of evidence is decisive. So intensely conscious were they of this new community of spirit that they immediately expressed it in a community of goods. "They had all things in common." As an eco-

nomic experiment it failed; for presently they were scattered by persecution. It would probably have failed in any case. To create an economic paradise within an economic chaos has always proved to be a forlorn hope. But here the failure is less significant than the attempt and what the attempt reveals — an absolute and complete identification of spirit and interest within the community of believers. The economics of the Upper Room are not important; but the impulse that underlay them is of the very essence of the church, though the church nowadays hardly encourages us to think that it is.

These then, very summarily, were the more immediate consequences of Pentecost; an accession of courage and power, the discovery of a gospel, the birth of a church.

5

The Gift of Tongues

At some point or other, we should have to make a digression in order to consider a phenomenon which appeared for the first time in

Christian history at Pentecost and was frequent and widespread in the apostolic church, *glossolalia,* or the gift of tongues. It may be as well to discuss the matter here. In the Pentecost narrative the gift of tongues is usually identified with the circumstance that at Pentecost the members of a presumably polyglot multitude each heard the gospel in the tongue in which he was born. This identification is undoubtedly mistaken, for though the multitude in Jerusalem at the time was drawn from various regions, it was almost certainly not polyglot; and it is, further, more than likely that, with few exceptions, its members were familiar with the Greek language. The great majority was in all probability bilingual. The "speaking with tongues" at Pentecost must be identified with those ecstatic but unintelligible utterances which frequently accompany outbreaks of religious excitement. Their significance is psychological rather than religious.

It is plain that glossolalia was regarded as an authentic manifestation of the Spirit; and those to whom the gift was given were under-

stood to be privileged people. St. Paul was one of the gifted ones and regarded the gift with respect. He included it in a list of the workings of the Spirit along with the " word of wisdom," " gifts of healings," and " prophecy." But he quite definitely ranks it as lower in worth than the gift of " prophecy," which we may take to be inspired intelligible utterance. His reason for assigning an inferior place to the gift of " tongues " was the unintelligibility of the utterance and its consequent uselessness to the company present. " Unless ye utter by the tongue speech easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye will be speaking into the air."

We may indeed trace here the beginnings of a scepticism on St. Paul's part of the value of this ecstatic utterance. To the community, he says to his correspondents, it is without value except it be interpreted, and interpretation was another and a separate gift. In I Corinthians, he does not doubt the authenticity of the power as a gift of the Spirit; but he is clear as to its insufficiency. It is not enough to speak or pray or sing in the

Spirit; it is necessary to speak and to pray and to sing with the understanding also. And lest any man unduly exalt himself because he possesses this or any other special gift, St. Paul reminds the Corinthians of the " more excellent way " of love, without which none of these gifts avail anything. It is fair to infer that the tongues were becoming an embarrassment.

However, it is safe to say that glossolalia was only a passing phenomenon. There is no reference to it in St. Paul's later epistles, which would seem to indicate that it had disappeared from the normal life of the church. It is significant that St. Paul writing to the Ephesians, bids them " be filled with the Spirit," and expects in consequence only the sober ecstasies of " speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart unto the Lord, giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God even the Father, subjecting yourselves one to another in fear of Christ." The church had outgrown the phase in which transient aberrations and extravagances were re-

garded as the marks of the spiritual life and had reached the normal plane of a rational spirituality.

How glossolalia is to be explained can only be a matter of conjecture. E. F. Scott's explanation is as plausible as any. A person may be so surcharged with religious excitement that he may not have the means of expressing it. Indeed, this is in its measure true not only of religious but of any æsthetic excitement. There is more in the experience than any man can tell — it " breaks through language and escapes." But when an illiterate person — and it is to be remembered that glossolalia, tarantism and the like occur by far most frequently among the illiterate — is overtaken by a religious exaltation beyond his capacity to tell, it must express itself in some fashion. It may take the form described in George Meredith's poem, " Jump to Glory Jane," or it may pour itself out in sounds which have the semblance but not the substance of coherent speech. But in any case, it is doubtful whether it has any religious worth. " A man is born both religious and rational; and the life which is not

both is neither." This is not to deny that there are legitimate and authentic ecstasies in the religious life; but these are known by their fruits.

6

The Gift of Power

We may, I think, dwell longer with advantage on the case of Peter. The healing of the cripple in the Beautiful Gate of the Temple is no longer in the category of miracle. We know that lame and infirm people have been cured by suggestion. In modern practice, the patient is sometimes put into a hypnotic state because he is in that condition more susceptible to suggestion. But the hypnotic condition is not necessary, if the suggestion can be delivered with sufficient power. Jesus had the power, as in the case of the dumb child whose speech was released when he said to her, " Ephphatha, be opened." And face to face with the cripple, Peter had the power — Peter, this unlettered man from Galilee, who knew much about boats and nets and not much else; for at his word, the lame beggar, born palsied

and forty years old, who had never walked, on the instant walks and leaps.

The sequel of this incident was the arrest of Peter and John; and later in the story we find them being examined in private by the Temple authorities. It was an important and an imposing gathering, and Peter had spent the night in prison where he had had plenty of time to cool down. But he stands there, before the moguls of the Sanhedrim wholly unafraid and tells them the truth about themselves without hedging or minimizing. And this was Peter, who, only a few weeks before, in the precincts of the same place, had quailed before a girl's accusing eye and had shamefully, violently denied his Lord. Surely an astonishing transformation.

This is typical of the entire episode. The word *power* is written over every page of the story. Here are ordinary men raised to a pitch so much above their ordinary selves that at their word a multitude is converted to their side. Weak men are transfigured into strong and fearless leaders; and things happen at their touch and at their look that break through the ambit

of ordinary experience. It looks on the face of it as though a tide of some new and unknown quality of life had been released and were sweeping the scene on which we are looking.

It is now established that we are all by nature possessed of powers and energies much greater than we usually suppose. The level at which we commonly live — whether of physical strength, or intellectual capacity, or of moral power — is much lower than that which is possible to us. Dr. Hadfield, an English neurological specialist, once asked three men to undergo a test of mental suggestion. He set them to grasp a dynamometer, first in their normal waking state; second, after suggesting to them under hypnosis that they were very weak; and third, after suggesting to them under the same conditions that they were very strong. These were the results: in their waking condition, their average grasp registered 101 pounds; under the hypnotic suggestion that they were very weak, the average was 29 pounds; under the hypnotic suggestion that they were very strong, the average was 142 pounds.

Our physical strength would at any given

moment appear to depend to a large extent upon our state of mind about it; and it is of course notorious that under unusual emotional stress we are able to perform feats of strength and endurance of which otherwise we should deem ourselves incapable. " The limits of possibility in our daily lives," says Dr. Hadfield, " are defined less by the body than by the mind; and the resources of power are psychical rather than physical in character." There seems to be little reason to suppose that what is true of our physical grasp is not also true of our mental grasp and our moral grasp. A very large part of our natural human capital goes unused. But why?

Here is the lame man in our story. He had been lame from his birth; and yet it is obviously true that there was really nothing the matter with his limbs, for he immediately leaps and walks. But he had been from infancy told that he was a lame weakling; and he had grown up believing it. That belief had in time become a complete inhibition. That is a good part of the trouble with most of us — these arbitrary checks and limits that our minds set upon our powers.

Not long ago I had occasion to read some letters by and about a very remarkable woman. A young woman had been appointed by her to a certain task, from which she pleaded to be released on the ground that she simply could not do it. The elder woman replied, " Child, why do you inhibit yourself? " Most of us inhibit ourselves. We harbor fears and doubts, unbeliefs and uncertainties; and these things cripple us. There was Peter in the precincts of the high priest's house, trying to look inconspicuous, cowering before suspicious eyes, and finally collapsing into a disgraceful denial of his Lord. In that dark moment Peter was inhibited by fear. But a few weeks later, confronted not by maids and lackeys but by the great ones of the earth, he is standing his ground, a gentleman unafraid. From which we may gather that the Spirit had released Peter from his inhibitions.

But clearly, this was not all. The effect of the Spirit was not merely the negative one of removing inhibitions but the positive one of enhancing Peter's natural powers. The gift of the Spirit has sometimes been spoken of as though it were

a sort of magical addition to a man's natural force and capacity, something imposed upon him from without that gave him a superhuman quality. But Peter was never more than the very human person that he had always been. But it is quite evident that there had been a very extensive reinforcement of his natural powers. To this matter we shall have to return at a later stage; and we need not therefore dwell upon it further here. It is enough now to observe that we find men transcending themselves, outstripping their best powers, assuming the form and character of supermen by reason of an experience which they attributed to the Holy Spirit.

7

The Gift of Grace

The coming of the Spirit had very conspicuous ethical results. I have already spoken of the new intensity of fellowship which followed the experience among those to whom it came. But we may well pause a little to look at it more closely. "And the multitude of them that believed were of

one heart and soul; and not one of them said that aught of the things which he had possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And great grace was among them all. For neither was there among them any that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto each, according as anyone had need."

The keyword here is the word *grace*. It is of course not used in its full theological sense. It is to be taken as signifying a prevailing graciousness in the mutual relationships of the primitive Christian community. There is a figure used of the coming of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost which might well stand for the impression that the early chapters of Acts make on us as a whole: " the rushing of a mighty wind." We are looking upon a company of people charged with an irresistible energy, a flaming courage, producing conviction of sin in their neighbours and alarm in the authorities. That is the impression they made upon the outer world. But among them-

selves, the word which describes their temper is this word *grace,* which suggests a serene, beautiful and generous atmosphere. But it was not atmosphere only. It discharged itself in definite action; " for neither was there any among them that lacked."

It has long been the fashion to speak of the *communism* of the early church; but this has no kind of affinity with the communism of which we hear so much today. Communism as we know it is the doctrine — and in Russia the practice — of the forcible expropriation of property and its administration by the state. But there is nothing of that kind in this story. Nor is there anything in the story that suggests that any kind of communism is an economic faith or practice obligatory on all Christians. We are not under law but under grace. Whether any form of communism is right or wrong, practicable or impracticable, does not come up for discussion: for the question is not raised here.

What the story tells us is how men will regard their property and how they will dispose of it when they have had the experience which the

apostolic company had had. And so far as property is concerned the matter can be put in a nutshell: when men have received the Holy Spirit, they cease to regard their property as their own, to be used for their own private ends; they conceive that they hold it in trust for their fellows and part with it willingly to meet their fellows' needs.

What happened in the early church was something quite simple. There was no theory or doctrine about it. These men and women had passed through a great experience which had set them beside themselves. Their life was full of rapture and ecstasy. It is a commonplace of experience that the coming of a great joy releases a wave of good will towards men. And these simple early Christians, so far from supposing that they had discovered a new economic philosophy, were simply flooded with a spirit of brotherhood and fellowship; and they did the natural thing under the circumstances. Those who had anything shared with those who had nothing; and they did not suppose that there was any virtue in it. It was all in the day's work.

Great grace was upon them all; and they did these generous and brotherly things, because they could not help it. The distinction, however, of this particular episode lies in the thoroughness and the completeness of the sharing. The property of one became outright the property of all.

Nor was this all. The grace did actually work a sort of miracle. These things could not have been done had there not been people to whom they could be done, and who were willing that they should be done to them. It needs grace to give rightly; but it needs more grace to be able to receive without shame. What we have here is that astonishing kind of fellowship in which receiving is as much a joy as giving, where accepting a gift is the very seal of fellowship. In our normal condition of pride and self-sufficiency, we cannot accept gifts without a sense of humiliation, whatever our need. We boast ourselves of a spurious, even a poisonous, independence. But the Christian ideal is of a brotherhood in which " give " and " take " are equally acts of grace, where the receiving is a kind of giving, and the giving a kind of receiving. And such a brother-

hood was achieved once in this world — the brotherhood that followed Pentecost.

If one singles out this circumstance as the most significant result of Pentecost, it is, I think, for a sufficient reason. The immediate experience of power and ecstasy, which forms the most spectacular element in the event, is not suitable for the daily fare of human nature. As Jesus plainly implied to Peter, the Mount of Transfiguration is a good place to visit, but not a good place to inhabit. Flesh and blood cannot long stand the tension of superlative ecstasy without injury. At the best, the exaltation of Pentecost can only be an occasional experience.

But the fellowship of the early Christians is another matter. It was a manifestation of what should be a normal ethical state. To be sure, even the fellowship was of a quality and an intensity not easy to retain in ordinary circumstances. But none the less, it did once for all establish the grace of fellowship as an abiding principle of the Christian life. This indeed is only another way of affirming the sovereignty of love. The word *love* has suffered much from base

usage and sentimental abuse, and we do not commonly realise how huge and heroic a thing it is in the New Testament. St. Paul himself had a profound understanding of the unique significance of love in the Christian life; and, as we have seen, his great panegyric of love emerged out of a discussion of the occasional and abnormal manifestations of spiritual life.

It is not perhaps impertinent to suggest that there is abiding need to emphasize the preëminence of the ethical outcome of the spiritual life even in its most exalted state. It is natural that like Peter we should want to build tabernacles in these high places. But there are humdrum times ahead. After we have shed the eagle's wings, we shall have to walk; and what shall we have to go on with through the pedestrian days?

Those who have passed through the experience of a religious revival know that these are not idle questions. The crowds, the waves of emotion, the enthusiasm, the excitement — we are familiar with the outward and visible signs of revivalism, and I say no more about them than that they are there. But I suspect that St. Paul

would have asked us at the end: Do the folk love each other any better than they did? Souls have been saved, you say; and that is good. But pray tell me; is there less pride, less vanity, less uncharitableness, more patience, more sympathy, more brotherhood in the community? How much ordinary, simple, unassuming love came out of the affair? This is the rule for normal times; this is the primary fruit of the Spirit.

8

After Eighteen Years

That persecution defeats itself is a commonplace of history; and there is no more notable instance of it than in the early diffusion of the gospel. After the martyrdom of Stephen, the general body of Christians in Jerusalem were scattered. But the traditional stupidity of the official and professional mind disabled the Sanhedrim authorities from seeing that it was a very dangerous thing to disperse these violent and impassioned men and allow them to carry their dangerous doctrines afield. The actual effect of

the persecution on the individual was to stiffen his resolution and to fan his zeal. In consequence, there was a rapid diffusion of the Christian message. By one means or another, the gospel was within a very short time carried as far northward as Damascus, Syria, and Cilicia; westward to the Mediterranean coast from Gaza to Antioch, perhaps beyond to Cyprus. How far eastward, we do not know; but we may confidently conclude that the news went southward to Abyssinia.

Nor was the distribution merely geographical. Whether it be the artifice of the compiler of the story or not, it is at least interesting to observe the progressive character of the movement in relation to the religious standing of those who heard and accepted it. The first converts were Hebrews; the next were Hellenistic Jews, then comes Nicolaus, a proselyte of the sanctuary. Next we hear of the conversion of Samaritans, and shortly after of the Ethiopean. So far, this movement is still within the circle of the circumcision. But presently we find the " Godfearers," the proselytes of the gate, coming in; and finally

the Gentiles. It is as though the thrust of the new movement were carrying it on step by step, disentangling itself from its Judaic mother's apron strings until it finds itself at last, foot-loose and free upon the threshold of the Gentile world.

But wheresoever it went, the Holy Spirit is reported to have been active. In all, the Spirit is spoken of twenty-five times in the first thirteen chapters of the Book of Acts. It figures as the presiding and directing power of the proceedings. The leaders, Peter and the apostles, Stephen, Saul and Barnabas are said to have been filled with or to be full of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit commands and directs; it separates Paul and Barnabas to the Gentile mission. It gives power and comfort; men received, or were baptized with or were anointed with the Holy Spirit. The Jews resisted the Spirit; Ananias lied to it; and the Spirit fell upon men; and was poured out upon the Gentiles. This is the language which the historian uses; and it is clear that it is language that could not be used save only as those who used it believed that they were speaking of a personal power in their midst.

Before we conclude this brief summary of Pentecost and its immediate sequels, we should do well to compare the beginning and the end of the period under review, to compare Jerusalem and Antioch.

The two outstanding features of the Jerusalem company after Pentecost were its propagandist fervor and its intense consciousness of solidarity. Now it happens that the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. The name was probably first given in derision; but be that as it may, the coming of the name indicated that the world had become aware of a new phenomenon in its midst, which had a character of its own and required a name for itself. The church had evidently been recognized in Antioch as a unique body, having its own definite personality and for which a fresh classification had to be invented.

In Jerusalem, it is more than probable that the apostles themselves thought of themselves only as a movement within the circle of Judaism, as it were, a new synagogue; and it was mainly under the stress of persecution that they come to

recognize the incongruity of their faith and testimony with the prevailing orthodoxy. But in Antioch, where the strain and stress had largely subsided, the outward world looked upon these people and recognized that they saw a new thing for which a label had to be devised. Wherein then did the distinction of the Christian society in Antioch lie?

There are two things which lend us a clue. First, the first Christians to arrive in Antioch came during the persecution following the death of Stephen, and they, in accordance with the prevailing idea, preached the gospel only to Jews. But a second wave came, including some Hellenistic Jews, who were ordinarily of a more liberal temper than their Hebrew fellow-believers; and they began to preach the gospel to the Greeks. The Greeks were familiar with the Jews and knew that they kept their religion to themselves. They never engaged in active proselytization, though a Gentile seeker might under some circumstances come into the outer circle of the covenant. But here were Jews who went out to make converts — a new kind of Jew who was

also manifestly frowned upon by the Jews with whom the city was familiar — Jews who were anxious to share their faith with the Greek.

In Antioch the Christian society retained the propagandist fervor of the original company in Jerusalem. And the crowning evidence of this evangelizing zeal lies in the separation — as we are told, at the call of the Holy Spirit — of Paul and Barnabas to a general mission to the Gentile world. Look on it as you will, it is an astonishing thing that this little company of believers in Antioch, probably composed, as all such companies were, of humble folk — not many noble, not many mighty, not many wise being attracted to them — should have looked out upon the Gentile world with desiring eyes and have dreamed the heroic dream of making of it a Kingdom of Christ, and then with a naïve daring should have sent out two men to make their dream come true. Here was courage more than comparable with the courage of the apostles at Pentecost.

Then that quality of fellowship which marked the company of the apostolic church emerges at Antioch in a remarkable form. Tidings had

reached Antioch of the distress among their fellow-believers in Jerusalem consequent upon a severe famine. Whereupon the Antioch Christians made what nowadays we should call an "every-member canvass," and each gave according to his ability to a relief fund. The bond of Christian fellowship was not an affair of physical contiguity or of felicitious speech; it was a living thing that discharged itself in concrete acts of brotherhood. The Christian society in Antioch stood in the spiritual succession of Pentecost.

Now, if we assume that the Crucifixion took place in A.D. 29 and that Paul and Barnabas returned from their famine relief journey to Jerusalem in A.D. 47 — a famine in Judea is recorded by Josephus as reaching its height in A.D. 46 — the period which is covered by the story from Pentecost to the commission of Paul and Barnabas is eighteen years. It is worth some reflection that the impulse which was quickened at Pentecost, so far from being exhausted, is found, after eighteen years, seeking new worlds to conquer. The outlook has been widened, the propagandist zeal and the courage are unabated, and

the ethical quality of the community is unmistakable.

A religious uprising which seems to have run an undiminished course for a space of eighteen years, and at the end of that time is entering upon a period of wide expansion, could not have found its origin in an illusory experience or a temporary excitement. The people most profoundly involved in this remarkable episode attributed it to the coming of the Holy Spirit. Their Scriptures had told them of a Spirit who brooded over chaos and gave it form, who inspired their prophets, who was in some sense the agent of God in his more conspicuous and notable dealings with men. It was therefore natural and reasonable to trace the great thing that happened to them to the operations of this same Spirit.

PART II

The Spirit at Large

I

The Spirit of Emergence

When the Spirit came upon the disciples in the Upper Room a new thing was born into the world. It was a creative moment. It was not indeed recognized at the time that the new thing was as novel as it actually was. Here was a company of people who shared a common experience and a common loyalty. Superficially, one looking at them would have predicted that as the years passed by and memory paled, the company would disintegrate and disappear, as many such companies have done. But instead of that, something happened that turned this timid, apprehensive yet expectant group of men and women into a solid church with a flaming gospel — and their spiritual descendants are to be found today in great numbers in all parts of the world. It is not hyperbole to describe that event as creative.

That convenient word "emergent" itself emerges just here. In the biological sense, an

emergent is a new thing that comes into being in the course of the evolutionary process. In it are gathered up all its antecedents; but it is not merely the sum of its antecedents. Over and above these, there is now added a new empirical quality which gives the whole a character different from any or all of its antecedents. And when we consider the transformation of the company of disciples on the day of Pentecost, it is difficult to reject the notion that here we have a spiritual analogy with a natural "emergent."

This doctrine of "emergents" seems to fit the pertinent facts of nature so adequately that it seems to be on the way to general acceptance. But so far no sufficient explanation of the phenomenon of emergence upon purely naturalistic grounds has been forthcoming. Dr. Whitehead speaks of God as a "principle of concretion," which seems to offer a clue. The antecedents are "concreted" into a new event — a statement which, incidentally, fits the happening at Pentecost very admirably — and the agent of this operation is God. Another scientist has spoken of "a special divine influx" as the proper

and perhaps the only possible explanation of emergence.

It has been pointed out that in Miocene times, at the time when the human family was beginning to fork off from the simian, there was a great increase in the size of the brain in many mammals; and it seems probable that ancestral humanoid stock "mutated" suddenly in the direction of a larger and more complex brain. But why these things happened we do not know; nor have we any knowledge of the factors that led to the emergence of consciousness, or of perception and reflection. But that there have been such step-like advances in the evolutionary processes appears to admit of little doubt.

In like manner, art in the shape of cave-drawings seems to emerge suddenly and without warning — and appears in its most perfect form in the earliest stage. That, as Mr. Chesterton has suggested, is the real début of man as we know him. It is plain that in all emergence something out of the common happens and it requires an explanation which is not yet available.

This raises the question whether that influence or active principle which the apostles call the Spirit may not be operative outside the specifically religious sphere, on different levels indeed, but with comparable results. We will not prejudice our inquiry at this point by assuming anything about the Spirit; and if we continue to use the term, it is without for the moment importing into it any idea which our examination of the Pentecost narrative may have suggested. That there is at work in the world an influence which may be described as creative wherever it operates, which is capable of reinforcing life and enhancing natural faculty and of producing characteristic effects in the intellectual, æsthetic and ethical fields — for this there is impressive evidence.

2

The Spirit of Discovery

In his book, *Science and Method,* Henri Poincaré, the French mathematician, has a chapter on mathematical discovery in which he

relates certain personal experiences. I venture to quote from it a passage which is full of technicalities, but which in its main intention is intelligible enough for my present purpose. Here it is:

" For a fortnight, I had been attempting to prove that there could not be any function analogous to what I have since called the Fuschian functions. I was at that time very ignorant. Every day I sat down at my table and spent an hour or two trying a great number of combinations and arrived at no result. One night, I took some black coffee, contrary to my custom, and was unable to sleep. A host of ideas kept surging in my head. I could almost feel them jostling one another, until two of them coalesced to form a stable combination. When morning came I had established the existence of one class of Fuschian functions, those that are derived from the hypergeometric series. I had only to verify the results which only took a few hours.

" Then I wished to represent these functions by the quotient of two series. The idea was perfectly conscious and deliberate. I was guided by

the analogy with elliptical functions. I asked myself what must be the properties of these series, if they existed, and I succeeded without difficulty in forming the series that I have called the Theta-Fuschian.

" At this moment, I left Caen, where I was then living, to take part in a geological conference arranged by the School of Mines. The incidents of the journey made me forget my mathematical work. When we arrived at Coutances, we got into a break to go for a drive, and just as I put my foot on the step, the idea came to me, though nothing in my former thoughts seems to have prepared me for it, that the transformations I had used to define Fuschian functions were identical with those of non-Euclidian geometry. I made no verification and had no time to do so, since I took up the conversation again as soon as I had sat down in the break; but I felt absolute certainty at once. When I got back to Caen, I verified the result at my leisure to satisfy my conscience.

" Then I began to study arithmetical questions without any great apparent result and with-

out suspecting that they could have the least connection with my previous researches. Disgusted at my want of success, I went away to spend a few days at the seaside and thought of entirely different things. One day, as I was walking on the cliff, the idea came to me again with the same characteristics of conciseness, suddenness and immediate certainty, that arithmetical transformations of indefinite ternary quadratic forms are identical with those of non-Euclidian geometry.

" Returning to Caen, I reflected on this result and deduced its consequences. The example of quadratic forms showed me that there are Fuschian groups other than those which correspond with the hypergeometric series. I saw that I could apply to them the theory of the Theta-Fuschian series, and that, consequently, there are Fuschian functions other than those which are derived from the hypergeometric series, the only ones that I knew up to that time. Naturally I proposed to form all these functions. I laid siege to them systematically, and captured all the outworks one after the other. There was one

however that still held out, whose fall would carry with it that of the central fortress. But all my efforts were of no avail at first, except to make me better understand the difficulty, which was already something. All this work was perfectly conscious.

" Thereupon I left for Mount Valerian, where I had to serve my term in the army, and my mind was preoccupied by very different matters. One day as I was crossing the street, the solution of the difficulty which had brought me to a stand-still came to me all at once. I did not try to fathom it immediately and it was only after my service was finished I returned to the question. I had all the elements and had only to assemble and arrange them. Accordingly I composed my definitive treatise at a sitting and without any difficulty.

" It is useless to multiply examples and I will content myself with this one alone. As regards my other researches, the accounts I should give would be exactly similar."

Now the mathematics of this passage does not concern us: but the mathematician does. It

is worth observing just here that mathematics is supremely the one study in which the outsider supposes that results are achieved by a process of reasoning that is altogether rigid and exact and admits of no chance elements. But here is a mathematician who bears frank witness that at critical junctures in his investigation, the required light emerged unbidden to his mind at odd and irrelevant times and places. Evidently the study of mathematics in its highest branches is not a reign of law, but is liable to unexpected and unpredictable invasions from the " unknown."

Poincaré's explanation of these happenings is the conventional psychological one. He summons up the *subconscious* to account for them. But the subconscious is itself a hypothesis, and in consequence an object of faith. It is assumed upon grounds precisely analogous to those on which some of us assume the existence of God. But the " unconscious " implies another doubtful hypothesis — the walled-city view of personality. It is assumed that the gestations of the mathematical discoveries which Poincaré describes in his narrative, went on in some dark

pit within his own personality, which had a contact with his mind but with nothing else.

We are quite obviously in a region of guesswork. There is no invincible reason why we should regard personality as an isolated, closed-in system; and consequently it is open to us to inquire whether it is not at least as rational an explanation of Poincaré's discoveries or illuminations to say that that entity once memorably called "the Spirit of Truth" had something to do with them. It may be that what we call the subconscious is no other than the underlying continuum of all life of which we and our minds are concrete embodiments and from which our minds are not disconnected.

For it is to be observed that Poincaré's experience shows that whatever influence was at work, it was an intelligent and cooperative influence. This may be quite true of the "subconscious," if there be such a thing. But what are we to make of evidences of intelligence in life at levels in which the actual forms of life themselves presumably have neither consciousness nor intelligence.

To take the instance nearest to my hand at the moment, I quote from Samuel Butler's *Life and Habit:* " There is no man in the whole world who knows consciously or articulately as much as a half-hatched hen's egg knows unconsciously. Surely the egg in its own way must know quite as much as a chicken does. We say of the chicken that it knows how to run about as soon as it is hatched. So it does; but had it the knowledge before it was hatched? What made it lay the foundation of those limbs which should enable it to run about? What made it grow a horny tip to its bill before it was hatched, so that it might peck all round the larger end of the egg and make a hole for itself to get out at? Having once got outside the eggshell, the chicken throws away this horny tip, but is it reasonable to suppose that it would have grown it at all unless it had known that it would want something with which to break the eggshell? "

Now I am not going to discuss what Samuel Butler meant by " knowing." I wish to point out only the plain evidence of unconscious intelligence when there is no higher level of conscious

intelligence to set it in motion. The chicken somehow divined the problem of escaping from the egg and found a solution for it. If this is not evidence of intelligence, it is difficult to see what constitutes such evidence. The chicken somehow made a discovery as real as Poincaré's. Poincaré is at pains to show that his own conscious self had little if anything to do with his discoveries; it is certain that the chicken had very little to do with its discovery. It would appear therefore that there is some intelligent force making for *discovery* at work in the world at more levels than one, which, however, we can detect only at second hand, that is, through its operations. If it be objected that Poincaré and the chicken constitute too slender a ground for this generalization, the answer is that other instances might be plentifully supplied.

3

The Spirit of Ecstasy

Every preacher has at some time or another had the experience of struggling with a refractory

sermon; and then when he has reached the eleventh hour and is on the verge of despair, he sits down at his desk and to his surprise finds the sermon almost writing itself. He knows that when a sermon has been composed under those conditions, he will probably hear of it again, after he has preached it. It commonly happens that such sermons prove to be unusual "means of grace." I suppose that the only way to describe this experience is by the term "inspiration." It may take other forms. Perhaps I may be allowed to relate one or two personal experiences.

Many years ago, I was under promise to preach on a Sunday afternoon in a little church in the highlands of my own county of Merioneth in North Wales. From my morning engagement, I had to go a long distance on foot; and as the country was new to me at that time, I looked forward to my walk with some little excitement, not alone on account of the reputed grandeur of the scenery, but also because my way took me near to the place where once lived Colonel John Jones, a son-in-law of Oliver Cromwell, and a signatory of the death warrant of Charles I.

As I went along the rough hill road, my mind was much occupied with these matters; and I gave the sermon I intended to preach hardly any thought at all — as in fact I proposed to repeat the morning sermon. When I got into the pulpit, I was rather hot and tired; and it promised to be a drowsy afternoon. I took my text in due order, and then after a sentence or two, I left the original trail and preached an entirely different and quite unprepared sermon. To myself, as I preached it, it seemed a rather remarkable sermon; and there was certainly no drowsiness in the congregation. My mind was working with unusual clarity and precision; and my diction was impeccable — a somewhat unusual circumstance for me, as my public diction in Welsh has never been particularly good.

Later in the day, as soon as I found a little privacy, I tried to recover the sermon and put it down on paper. But the attempt was an almost complete failure. Nor was my own impression of the character of the sermon unsupported by other evidence on the part of those who heard it.

One Easter morning, I was sitting in my pul-

pit, just before preaching to a large congregation. Quite suddenly I became aware that I should not preach the sermon I had prepared; and I rose to my feet with only one thing in my mind — the story of R. W. Dale of Birmingham who one Easter morning was suddenly surprised by a new-born conviction that Jesus Christ was alive, and walked up and down his study saying to himself as it were in an ecstasy of discovery, " He is alive, He is alive." I told the story; and the experience I have already recounted was repeated. There was the clarity and precision of mind, the same ease and fitness of diction.

George Russell (Æ) in an account of a mystical condition describes my own experience on both occasions. " Our faculties readjust themselves and do the work we will them to do. Never did they do their work so well. The dark caverns of the brain begin to grow luminous. We are creating our own light. . . . How quick the mind is now! How vivid is the imagination! " In both cases, I still have a vivid remembrance of the sheer delight I had in the preaching.

Now it is not the preacher only to whom this

kind of experience comes. It happens to the writer and to the artist, to every man whose vocation is one of creative self-utterance. And it may be asserted with some assurance that their highest and most characteristic utterances come out of experiences of this kind.

Mr. A. E. Housman, the poet of *The Shropshire Lad,* in the preface to his only other volume, *Last Poems,* writes, " I publish these poems, few though they are, because it is not likely that I shall ever be impelled to write much more. I can no longer expect to be revisited by the continuous excitement under which in the early months of 1895 I wrote the greater part of my other book; nor indeed could I well sustain it." The word excitement is a somewhat modest account of the experience, considering how little of any value comes out of most excitements. But it is evidently a word which commends itself to those who have gone through an experience similar to Mr. Housman's.

The late C. E. Montague speaks of " the authentic excitement from which great art arises "; and in a letter comments upon the power of this

excitement to make men so transcend themselves that the contrast between the personality of the man and the exaltation of his work is sometimes disconcerting: "Goldsmith is a specially good case; but anybody ought to understand it who has had the common experience of meeting a famous author or artist (when he is not excited above himself by functioning in his art) and feeling let down by his relative dullness in talk. Was it Johnson who called some great actress an 'inspired idiot,' for the same reason? I fancy every writer, when he reads something that he wrote with the proper excitement on him, thinks: 'How did I ever do anything so good as that?' Didn't Thackeray say something of the sort afterwards when he read his scene between Lord Steyne, Becky and Rawdon?"

Mr. Arthur Machen makes the same point at another angle: "If ecstasy be present, then I say there is fine literature. If it be absent, then in spite of all the cleverness, all the talents, all the workmanship and observation and dexterity, then, I think, we have a product (possibly a very interesting one) which is not fine literature. Of

course you will allow me to contradict myself or rather to amplify myself. . . . I said my answer was the word ecstasy. I still say so, but I may remark that I have chosen this word as the representative of many; substitute if you like rapture, beauty, adoration, wonder, awe, mystery, sense of the unknown, desire for the unknown. All and each will convey what I mean; for some particular case one term may be more appropriate than another; but in every case there will be that withdrawal from the common life and the common consciousness which justifies my choice of 'ecstasy' as the best symbol of my meaning. I claim then that here we have the touchstone which will infallibly separate the higher from the lower in literature, which will range the innumerable company of books in two great divisions, which can be applied with equal justice to a Greek drama, an eighteenth century novelist and a modern poet, to an epic in twelve books and to a lyric in twelve lines."

Magnin, a French critic, bears a similar witness: "I do not think there is a single man so deprived of imagination as not to have felt, at

least once in his life, that superexcitation of the intelligence, that momentary vertigo of the heart and thought which I call the *poetic state.*"

The Abbé Bremond, from whose excellent and charming book, *Prayer and Poetry,* the last quotation has been taken, in that same book works out a close analogy between the poetic state and the mystical state. The upshot of his discussion is that poetry is arrested prayer, prayer that falls short of its mark: "We said with Père de Grandmaison that poetic activity was a profane, natural sort of preliminary sketch of mystical activity, profane and natural, surely —we have just repeated it; but what is more, confused, clumsy, full of holes and blanks, so that in the last resort the poetic is but an evanescent mystic whose mysticism breaks down." M. Bremond begs the poets not to be angry and explains that their breakdown arises from the very nature of things. The mystic is not concerned with self-expression; his aim is knowledge of the real; and the more of that knowledge he has, the less is he capable of telling it. Whereas the vocation of the poet is to tell; and this is also his handicap.

For in the telling he has to use words; and however magically he uses them, he misses the mark.

For myself, I cannot profess enthusiasm for the completely incommunicable mystical state. I sympathize rather with the poet's eagerness to speak and to share his vision. And if I were to make any religious comparison with the poet, I should call for the prophet. Here you have, as in Isaiah or Amos, an inspiration which is justly comparable with the poet's — save only in its terrific assurance. The prophet is in a state of excitement and transcends himself in his utterance, as the poet does. He speaks, as the authentic poet sings, because he must. His distinction lies in the confidence that he speaks to men with a sort of ultimate authority. *Thus saith the Lord!* He is more completely beside himself than the poet. He is literally in an ecstasy, standing outside himself; and he is moved by a constraint so invincible that he attributes it to God. The prophet is concerned with righteousness where the poet is concerned for beauty. And there is no reason that I can see for declining to attribute the inspiration of both to the same

source — the only difference being that the prophet is probably nearer the source. And for my part, I would as readily trace to the same source the inspiration that led M. Poincaré to his mathematical discoveries. However we are ultimately to describe this source of inspiration, excitement, ecstasy, call it what you will, its scope embraces the good, the beautiful and the true, the three broad aspects under which the Real presents itself to us.

4

The Spirit of Revelation

A few years ago, Sir James Barrie delivered at St. Andrew's University a rectorial address in which he had much to say of a certain McConnachie: "McConnachie, I should explain, is the name which I give to the unruly half of me, the writing half. . . . I am the half of myself that is dour and practical and canny. He is the fanciful half. My desire is to be the family solicitor standing firm on my hearth-rug among the harsh realities of the office furniture, while he prefers

to fly around on one wing. I shouldn't mind him doing that, but he drags me with him." A little later on, he tells us that it is McConnachie who writes the plays.

We know our Barrie; and we have discovered that often when his touch is lightest his thought is apt to be deepest. " McConnachie " is Barrie's way of telling us that there is more in us than meets the eye, that behind our dull and respectable exteriors there is something that has a wing. Every man has his McConnachie, if he has not strangled him, not perhaps a McConnachie that sees visions and translates them into drama or music, but a real one, none the less. When the day's work is done and you shut out the clamor of the street, in your own quiet, familiar chamber, you sometimes are aware of a faint flutter within, as of a broken wing. That is McConnachie, reminding you that he is there and trying to fly where he belongs. To put all this into prose, " McConnachie " is simply Barrie's way of speaking of that part of our being that we call *Aspiration.*

Another man of letters — this time, Mr.

John Masefield — delivered a similar address in a Scottish university, in which he said, "Life is infinitely more mysterious than anything you can say. You cannot probe its mystery. You know nothing about it. Then you will be filled with despair. Then you will turn again to your work. You will realize that somewhere outside life there come gleams and suggestions — a kind of butterflies and suggestions, floating into this world from somewhere. You make yourself the determination that you will follow these butterflies of the soul and find that you come at last to some country that is quite close to this life of ours. You will be able to enter it and make it visible to the rest of mankind, and then you can go on in that faith."

Now we know what McConnachie is doing when he is flying about on his one wing. He is chasing what John Masefield calls "these butterflies of the soul." To return to prose again — the butterflies of the soul are Mr. Masefield's way of speaking of that fact of experience which we call *Revelation.*

Our ordered secular knowledge is the fruit of

the labor of one part of us. We have five or so senses, we have intellect and reason; and our textbook knowledge, our science, our history, our anthropology and the rest are the achievement of this part of us — though as we have learned from Poincaré, the " spirit " has something to do with this achievement. But it is a commonplace of experience that there is knowledge of another kind, the knowledge that McConnachie is after, and which, as Mr. Masefield says, comes to us according to no known rule but as it were " butterflies floating into this world from somewhere." There is knowledge which we seek and find; there is knowledge for which we wait and it comes to us.

" Think you amid this sum
Of things forever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
And we must still be seeking? "

C. J. Romanes insists that " reason is not the only attribute of man, nor is it the only faculty which he habitually employs for the ascertain-

ment of truth. Moral and spiritual faculties are of no less importance in their respective spheres even of everyday life — faith, trust, taste, et cetera, are as needful in ascertaining truth as to character, beauty, et cetera, as is reason. Indeed, we may take it that reason is concerned in ascertaining truth only where *causation* is concerned; the appropriate organs for its ascertainment where anything else is concerned belong to the moral and spiritual region." The line of distinction is undoubtedly being drawn too sharply here; but the broad distinction itself is valid enough. There are things we find out by a process of inquiry; there are things that *come* to us — or so it seems to us.

But McConnachie has to be on the wing if he is to catch the butterflies. An attitude of expectancy, of "wise passiveness," of receptivity, is generally necessary for the arrival of revelation. It comes to a place prepared for it. For many years, I was tormented by an inability to get anything out of instrumental music. It seemed to have nothing to say to me, and in spite of the use I made of every opportunity to listen to instru-

mental music, I seemed to be held up before a permanently closed door. I was in college at the time, and one of my friends was an unusually accomplished pianist. One Sunday afternoon, I was with him in his lodging and he was playing some nocturnes of Chopin to me. I well remember the unstopping of my inward ear. The music transported me to a woodland, and the sound of running water, and an amber light over the whole; and the moment remains vivid to this hour. The door was at last ajar. I don't know that I am much farther in today than I was able to go that day. But at least music is no longer a dark continent to me.

Something of the same kind happened to me some years after in the enjoyment of pictures. I have an inherited love of color, but I never could see in the great picture what the pundits said they saw in them. I read books upon the appreciation of art, on how to see pictures and the like, but in vain. I enjoyed the colors, but much as I enjoyed the colors of fine fabrics in shop-windows. But being in Paris for the first time, I went on the conventional pilgrimage to the pic-

ture gallery in the Louvre, having by that time almost given up hope that I would ever cross the invisible barricade that stood between me and a great painting. In my wandering through the galleries, I was brought up sharply before a group of Corots; and, before many moments had passed some casement was opened in my mind, and I know that I was *seeing* a picture for the first time in my life. The canvas on the wall became a living thing pouring into me an unimaginable thrill. I was almost beside myself with excitement. Since then, I have, I hope, been able to penetrate a little farther into this wonderland; and while I have realised that there are greater painters than Corot, he was the door by which I went in.

How are experiences like this to be explained? What bridged the gulf between that picture and myself? The physical bridge is easily enough accounted for; but the spiritual or mental bridge, what was it? The picture was entirely new to me, and had no associations for me. I had seen other Corots before, in London, but they did not move me. I experienced what can only be called

a new revelation; and the matter is full of mystery. How is the livingness of a great picture to be accounted for? By what magic does the grand excitement, as C. E. Montague calls it, that the painter transmits on to the canvas live on, and then have the power to communicate itself to a spectator after a long lapse of time? And then, why is it that this reflected " excitement " overtakes this man and passes that one by? And what is it that happens when the reflected *excitement* goes home? I take refuge in the language of Whitehead. Here were certain elements in a situation: I was standing before a picture; my mind was undoubtedly in a receptive state (though it had been often previously in a more eagerly receptive state); and then in a flash, as it were, something happened to me — a revelation, a perception, call it what you will. But whatever you call it, it was an *event* in the Whitehead sense and of a very intense kind to me. The various elements of the situation were " concreted " into a new event. And with Whitehead I see no other way of accounting for it than by saying that a principle of concretion was at work,

and that that was God. And for my part, I would identify this principle of concretion with that presence or mode of God that we call the Spirit.

5

The Wind Bloweth Where It Listeth

In the kind of experience with which we are now dealing there seems to be something that is fortuitous, even capricious, in its working. "Art," says Mr. George Moore, "is not always with us. We know not whence it comes or whither it goes. The muse was with us when we were poor or unhappy; and when we were rich she deserted us. Many instances could be given, and against them other instances could be set in which the muse demanded easy and comfortable circumstances and refused to follow the artist to the garret. Nor is the muse faithful to young men. She visits them and leaves them helpless before half their lives are worn away. She comes to old men in their old age and inspires one work, and henceforth they are stranded in common-

place. Yet there must be a law. Our pens write easily the word *must*. Why must there be a law? That there is a mystery is certain, and one that artists ponder, the afflicted and the unafflicted alike."

We assume that there must be a law from the analogy of law in the physical universe. But as some physicists are nowadays suggesting that there is a principle of indeterminacy in the physical universe, just as Bergson had already pointed out something of the same kind in the world of animate nature, it does not seem to be as pressing as it once was to assume the operation of a law in the region which we are now discussing. In any case, it is worth observing that the capricious and the fortuitous operation of the principle which governs the type of experience which we are now passing under review is wholly in keeping with what we find in the sphere of religion. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," says the writer of the Fourth Gospel, "thou hearest the sound thereof but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." And it is to be noted that this is written expressly as a parable of the opera-

tion of the Spirit. In the Gospels, the unpredictable character of religious events is emphasized more than once; they come in an hour ye know not! And it may be added that there is no clear rule that governs whom they come to or where.

The one thing that seems clear is that these experiences generally come to those who are in some state of preparedness. Not indeed always; nor apparently is the preparedness conscious, save in rare instances. In the little town of Kettering in England, at the end of the eighteenth century there were many good and saintly men, some estimable ministers of religion and a number of men of good education. But the great event of those years in Kettering went past them all and took place in a little cobbler's shop.

Why did the wind list to blow on William Carey? The one thing that we do know about Carey, apart from the fact that he was a devout man and a diligent searcher of the Scriptures, is that in his cobbler's shop he had a map of the world. Not much of a map, probably, but to Carey it represented a Christless world. Over this map Carey brooded hotly. The great event

was the coming to Carey of a vocation to preach the gospel to the heathen; and that event became the awakening of the modern missionary movement in evangelical Christendom. Carey was not in any way a man of obvious fitness for the task; and his religious brethren suggested as much to him. But the story of Carey is one of the epics of post-reformation times. The wind bloweth where it listeth; but evidently it blows with intelligence. The case of Carey is only one among many in which an unlikely man receives an evident vocation, and the vocation is ultimately justified by the man's achievement. For all the appearance of fortuitousness, there appears to be some principle of selection.

Further, it is well known that men are sometimes visited by a religious experience which thrusts them forth into a position of leadership for a season, after which they return to the commonplace. This is almost invariably the case in religious revivals of the spontaneous type. The worked-up revivalism so familiar in modern times, with its big leading figure, his retinue of associates and his apparatus of publicity, does not

enter into discussion here. That is a phenomenon of modern religious life which has its origins in the effort to compensate for the failure of organized religion to produce " results," and so far from being a case of " the wind bloweth where it listeth," it is manifestly a deliberate endeavor to " raise the wind." This is in no sense a reflection upon many estimable professional evangelists, but their usefulness has in late years been gravely compromised by the blatant and sometimes vulgar methods of promotion which have become customary in these affairs.

But we are at the moment considering rather the revivals that — like the Welsh Revival at the beginning of this century — sprang unexpectedly out of local spiritual conditions and spread afield. In that case, the leader was manifestly greatly inspired for a season; and his gift thereafter passed away. There are other instances of the same kind. Besides, it may be remarked that these endowments of unique religious power have no respect of person. They have come to young and old, to the ignorant and the learned. But we are not able yet to discover whether there be

a rule or not that governs these visitations. None the less, that is not to say that there is no rule, but that we are without the knowledge and the subtlety of insight that might enable us to descry a rule and to enunciate it. The only remark that can safely be made is that the wind, when it bloweth seems usually to *choose* a direction. Its elections appear to be made with discrimination. There is in general a foundation of character and a measure of fitness in those whom it raises to unique spiritual power.

6

The Spirit of Moral Reinforcement

"And great grace was upon them all." It is not within the religious sphere only that we may come upon this condition. Mr. J. A. Spender in his volume of reminiscences, *Life, Journalism and Politics,* tells this story: A little boy of five years of age was run over by an automobile and seriously injured in front of a military hospital in Kent. There was no civilian hospital near; so

the lad was taken in and a necessary operation had to be performed. But what next? There was no vacant bed in the hospital; and, besides, complete silence and darkness were essential to the patient's recovery. " We were all discussing this, when Sergeant-Major White, acting orderly, whose wound was nearly healed, said, ' Let him have my bed.' There were objections; but he pressed hard and finally put the child in his own bed and insisted that he should be allowed to keep watch — which he did, lying beside him on a mattress all night. But there were twelve other men in the ward, and how could there be silence and darkness? ' Leave it to us,' was the answer; and for three successive days and nights, there was hardly a light or a whisper in that ward; and all twelve lay in silence and darkness. As the story got about, other wards begged earnestly to be allowed to take a spell; but the sergeant-major and his ward absolutely refused to part with their patient: and with great pride nursed him back to life. He was a sweet child; and while he lay between life and death, the war and their wounds seemed to vanish, and day and

night there was only one question, 'Would they pull him through?'" Surely the appropriate comment upon this incident is, "And great grace was upon them all."

It may be urged that this only reveals the latent fineness of human nature, which was released by the most appealing sight in the world — a grievously stricken child. But that can only be a part of the explanation. To anyone who knows the normal life of a ward in a military hospital during the war, especially with patients in a state of convalescense, the self-control of these twelve men remains something of a miracle. There was evidently a release and an enhancement of the finest ethical qualities in these men which suggests that they were unusually reinforced.

Indeed, the story of the war is full of instances of a similar kind. A British officer in a Territorial Battalion once said to me during the war: "I knew my men for years before the war; and while I knew them to be on the whole very decent fellows, I didn't have much ground to suppose that they had any really fine instincts. Out

there at the front, they swear, they drink pretty heavily when they can get it: and their language is pretty coarse. But their chivalry, their courage, their endurance, their comradeship puts me to shame. Sometimes they look to me like saints." It is not in the nature of war to produce fine ethical results: but there are times when it becomes the occasion for the display of the noblest qualities at their highest power. And you cannot put down all this merely to the strain and stress of the circumstances. All one can say is that some floodgate is opened in men in these conditions which permits the inflow of some grace that enables them to transcend their normal selves. To be sure, there were plenty of exceptions; but most observers appear to agree in their witness to the singular fineness of the common man in the war. Apparently it was among those who were exposed to pride of place and authority that the most conspicuous moral failures occurred.

My mind almost inevitably has passed at this point to St. Paul's narrative of his own experiences: " Of the Jews received I forty stripes save

one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have been in the deep, in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils among false brethren, in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." Here you have courage, endurance, patience, beyond the common measure of man. We have no difficulty in assuming — if we believe in a spirit of God abroad in the world — that in St. Paul these qualities are, to use his own phrase, " the fruit of the Spirit." I see no reason why we should not ascribe them when we find them in a common soldier to the same origin. Actually, we conclude that identical results usually follow from identical causes.

It is not necessary to labor this point. What is evident is that in emergencies men are enabled to outstrip their normal stature; and it would be easy to multiply instances. The annals of peace no less than of war are full of examples. " By

their fruits, ye shall know them." And when we find unusual heights of moral attainment, we must recognize them as the fruits of a moral tree. For men do not gather figs of thistles. The only question that remains is whether the ultimate sources of these attainments are to be sought only within the compass of the individual personality.

Here I am still concerned only with unusual manifestations of what I have called moral reinforcement; and once more the evidence might be multiplied. The martyr, the explorer, the pioneer, the rebel, the missionary — from all these classes we could draw corroboration without end of this phenomenon of highly enhanced moral qualities.

7

The Spirit of Conversion

Some time ago, in a personal narrative, I read the following story. It was written by a man of mature years and recalled an experience of his youth. During the last term of his first year in

college, he was caught up into a very fast set; and, as he put it, there was no misdemeanor which he did not commit or attempt to commit. He neglected his work, and like the prodigal son, wasted his slender substance in riotous living. At that time, his parents had gone on a journey across the Atlantic, and on the ocean they had encountered a violent storm, which first disabled their ship and for two or three days tossed it about mercilessly, until the passengers were near despair. On their return, they heard rumors of the pace at which their son had been going; and when he returned home himself for the summer vacation, he had to give an account of himself. His mother in particular was very severe on him, unduly so, as he believed, and he was left after the inquisition in a state of bitterness.

One day his father asked him to search in a desk drawer for some papers; and in the course of his search, he came across a notebook which he had the curiosity to open. It turned out to be a diary that his mother had started to keep on the trans-Atlantic journey and he began to read it.

He presently came upon an unfinished account of the storm, and after that only one entry. That was a prayer in a single sentence for himself: "Lord, bless and save my eldest boy." The discovery immediately overwhelmed him, and after finding the paper his father wanted, he left the house and spent the day among some neighboring hills where he had a battle-royal with himself. He returned in the evening a morally changed man, and so he has ever since remained.

But so far as he could tell, there was no specifically religious element in his thought or his experience that day. He was naturally of a sceptical turn, and, in the relative freedom of college life, had taken leave of all his religious habits. It happened, however, on his return to college that fall, that he met a woman, a fellow-student, with whom on one occasion he fell into a discourse concerning religion. He found that the woman believed very devoutly in the efficacy of prayer; and in a rather flippant way, he said, "Then I wish you would pray for me." And she took him at his word and said, "I will." To his own great astonishment, as he was going to bed

that night, he felt an irresistible impulse to pray: and for the first time in many months he knelt in prayer. And according to his own testimony, his conversion was completed in that act of prayer. From that hour, life became a new thing.

The records of conversion are without number — and by conversion I mean that personal transformation which changes the whole direction of a man's life. In the case which I have quoted, it occurred in two parts, at two moments separated by many weeks. Sometimes, it has happened in the twinkling of an eye; in other cases, it has come as gently as a summer dawn. But in every case, it is very difficult to explain what has happened without invoking the idea of some causal energy apart from the individual himself. It is easy enough to speak of it as an irruption from the subconscious; but that, as I have already observed, involves a very considerable act of faith; and it fails to explain the ethical consequences of the event.

To be sure, there are cases of reversion, but are these too the results of an uprising from the

subconscious? Is it not more rational to explain them through the subsidence or the withdrawal of the agency which in the first instance wrought the moral change? Whatever the agency which brings about conversion may be, it seems to have an ethical character. In the story which I have told, it is probable that the shock of reading his mother's prayer jolted open some joint in his mind through which an influence of regeneration made its way in. And some such explanation as this is alone satisfactory to account for the conversion of say an Augustine or a Francis.

Not all conversions have this pronounced ethical character, for the simple reason that the experience comes to people of sound character. By any ordinary standard, Saul of Tarsus was a good man. He was, as he tells us, as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless. In his case, conversion was not the turning of a bad man into a good man, but of a legalist turned into a freeman. But with St. Paul's conversion we shall have to deal more fully at a later point, for it provides us with the classi-

cal ground for the discussion of the relation of "flesh" and "spirit."

But let me give an instance out of my own experience. A young girl in a congregation of which I was minister once came to see me about her own spiritual anxieties. She was a child of intelligence and good breeding, and it was not conceivable that she should be aware of serious moral shortcomings. But she was very troubled about her relation to God. I tried to explain matters to her, but presently discovered that she thought that she had a past which hindered her from being right with God. Then I tried to explain to her what New Testament repentance meant and quoted Jesus' words "Let the dead bury their dead." I shall never forget the light that kindled in her eye at the hearing of those words; and her spirit was set free. Now we may describe what happened in her case as illumination and perhaps realization; and the change that came was a change in her outlook upon life; and the occasion brought her great happiness.

Mr. Havelock Ellis tells an experience of his own which is pertinent to this discussion. He

tells how after the disappearance of the faith of his childhood, and after science had presently left him with a world which, he says, " I was prepared to accept, and yet a world in which, I felt, I could only wander restlessly, an ignorant and homeless child," he came across James Hinton's *Life in Nature*. Hinton's view of the universe was " something which not only the intellect might accept but the heart might cling to." " The bearing of this conception on my state of mind is obvious. It acted with the swiftness of an electric contact: the dull aching tension was removed; the two opposing psychic tendencies were fused in delicious harmony and my whole attitude to the universe was changed. It was no longer an attitude of hostility and dread, but of confidence and love. My self was one with the not-self, my will one with the universal will. I seemed to walk in light; my feet scarcely touched the ground. I had entered a new world." Here too was what may justly be called illumination, which as in the case of the young girl evoked a new outlook upon life.

What emerges is that at critical junctures in

life, there is some principle or influence abroad in the world that brings a transforming deliverance. We use the word conversion loosely in these connections; but there are conversions of more than one kind. A divided self is unified; a perplexed spirit attains certainty; a bound will gains freedom; a restless soul finds peace; a contrite heart is comforted — with, in every case, a transformed view of the world. "The former things are passed away: behold, all things are become new."

8

The Spirit of Fellowship

It appeared, in our study of Pentecost, that the new fellowship of the primitive Christians was probably the most significant result of the experience. Not indeed that fellowship was a new thing to them; for they had it before in the Upper Room. They had already enough in common to build upon it a living fellowship; but Pentecost brought to them a sense of solidarity and organic unity which was a new thing.

The instinct for fellowship has its roots in the stuff of life; and it has been one of the main factors in the evolution of life. All the way and at every stage there has been a getting together which has meant much for the elaboration and refinement of living forms. Its importance on the human plane can hardly be exaggerated. Man is not yet by any means what he should be; but without his gift of fellowship he would be a very much poorer thing than he is. It is his gift of getting together with his kind that brought forth the things by which he is distinguished from the rest of the animal creation. "In fellowship," said George Meredith, "religion hath its founts;" and while that is not the whole truth, there is much truth in it.

But man's capacity for fellowship taught him to speak and to write and helped him to acquire his sense of the good, the true and the beautiful. Without fellowship, he would have been incapable of philosophy, of science, of art; he could not have produced poets or prophets or saints. William Morris was not far wrong when he made John Ball, the mad priest of Kent, say in the

story: " Fellowship is heaven, lack of fellowship is hell. Fellowship is life; lack of fellowship is death. And the deeds that men do on the earth, it is for fellowship's sake that ye do them: and the life that is in it, that shall live on and on for ever, and each one of you a part of it, while many a man's life upon the earth, from the earth shall wane." And so insistent is this instinct of fellowship that any pretext is enough on which to gather together. Here are a number of people interested in Charles Dickens; they find one another out and must needs form a Dickens fellowship. The thing is as natural as the growing of grass.

To be sure, fellowship which was meant for our good may be perverted to our harm. Just as you may have a league of prayer, so you may have a fellowship of crooks. A fellowship of saints will make the saint saintlier; a fellowship of crooks will make the crook crookeder. The effect of fellowship is the enhancement of human power and faculty. Why this should be so is not clear; but it evidently has to do with something in the nature of personality. Since, however,

personality itself still remains a mystery, it is not easy to track the secret of the power of fellowship.

When John Smith meets William Brown in the street and they begin to speak to each other, outwardly they seem to be two separate individuals hailing each other across a gulf. But the gulf is not really there. The very fact that they understand each other's speech involves that there is no gulf. Their minds meet and mingle; they have become for that meeting a single thing within which their intercourse goes on. The meeting has created a *third* fact, has brought into being for that occasion a microcosm, a little universe, within which their minds act and interact.

Enlarge this principle to apply to a dozen minds and suppose them to possess a common interest and to have met to promote that interest. Once more a new microcosm has been created in which a dozen minds are acting and interacting together. Everyone who has been engaged in a serious discussion under those conditions knows what comes out of it in the way of clearer perceptions, larger, bolder and more balanced

thought, more solid conclusions. In this mutual interpenetration of personalities in fellowship there are possibilities that we have not yet grasped. We are still on the threshold of a wonderland of whose treasures we are only dimly conscious. When our knowledge of the principles that govern fellowship is enough to enable us to practice it effectually and fully we shall discover many things of which we have never dreamt. The art of fellowship is in its infancy.

I have spoken now only of fellowship on the intellectual plane. But we may have fruitful and healthy fellowship at work and in play; and everybody knows how much the easy *camaraderie* of an idle hour can bring in the way of refreshment. There can be fellowship at many levels, but on whatever level we meet, a new thing comes into being. A company of people meeting for a common purpose is more than a company. Something is added to them. The higher the level of fellowship, the more stimulating and energizing is this new thing. It adds momentum to the search for truth; it brings stimulus and joy and strength to the task of

human service; it adds reality and assurance to prayer.

It is necessary to consider this matter of the levels of fellowship in more detail. These levels are characterized by differences in the stability, the depth and the persistency of fellowship. In all fellowship there appears to be a factor supplementary to its actual components, namely, the group and the common interest. I have called it a microcosm within which the fellowship becomes articulate and active. At its best, a fellowship becomes something like an organism within which all the members act together in a genuine unity. There is within it a spontaneous coordination and cooperation. There is an energy of cohesion at work which cannot be explained merely as the product of the native instinct for fellowship.

Now the affinities by which personalities are linked together are still obscure to us. The unquestionable existence of the phenomena which we include under the word telepathy needs only to be mentioned to show how little we still know of the million means of communication that may

exist between persons. There are high degrees of love and friendship which seem to involve the permanent mutual penetration of personalities; and cases of this kind have been within the observation of all reflective minds. In the present state of our knowledge, it is idle to dogmatize in this region. But all we can be sure of is that there is a principle of mutual attraction between persons which makes for fellowship.

But the paradox of human nature is that it contains no less a principle of self-regard which on slight provocation becomes a principle of mutual repulsion. For this reason all human fellowship is precarious. The individual prizes his own individuality and is jealous of the integrity of his personality; and when any association in which he may stand begins to invade his freedom or to limit what he conceives to be his "rights," he immediately falls out with it. There are anarchic spirits in the world who seem incapable of fellowship on any terms; and they go through life playing for their own hands. Of this anarchy there is more than enough in every one of us. The dilemma of the natural man is

that he cannot do without fellowship and yet he cannot altogether do with it; and what fellowship he may create is in jeopardy every hour.

Yet there is much stable and fruitful fellowship in the world. But the distinction of this kind of fellowship lies in the seriousness of its interests and in the moral quality of its aims. Here, by some means, the instinct of fellowship is reinforced against the instinct of self-regard, and the microcosm within which it moves acquires more or less stability in consequence. A living fellowship is more than the sum of its component parts; and it may be justly described as an emergent.

I suggest that on these higher levels of fellowship, there is evidence of the operation of the "Spirit." The heavily handicapped instinct of fellowship is enabled to prevail against the stronger instinct of self-regard. It may indeed be that the impulse to fellowship was in the first instance born of the instinct of self-preservation. The first "colony" of cells may have been formed for the mutual aid and defence of its members. But on the human plane, fellowship

has shown itself capable of higher uses than that for which it was first intended, and indeed, if its origin lay in the instinct of self-preservation, the original purpose has long been superseded. And for these higher purposes, it has sometimes to be maintained against the impulse which gave it birth. For it cannot be maintained without some measure of self-surrender on the part of its members. But it is doubtful whether it could prevail against the selfish and divisive tempers of the natural man if it had to wage the war at its own charges.

The higher the level of the fellowship — that is, the more serious and momentous its concerns — the greater is the measure of its reinforcement and the more organic its life. I shall presently maintain that the most serious and momentous concern of man is religious aspiration. There is no fellowship like the fellowship of prayer; and no prayer like the prayer of fellowship. The deeper and more momentous are the concerns of our fellowship, the deeper and the more substantial does our fellowship become, the more intimately do we grow into

each other, the more closely blended into each other. The height of fellowship is reached by those who seek the face of God.

Now this is precisely what we found in the Upper Room before Pentecost. But Pentecost added something to this. We have observed the new and profounder unity which was reached. But what is evident is that the microcosm, the little universe of their fellowship, was realized in some sort as a Presence. The Spirit itself was present with them, presiding over them, encouraging and strengthening them, and fusing them into an organism.

This circumstance recalls a word of Jesus, "Where two or three are gathered together, there am I in the midst of them." It is not that the two's or three's become three's and four's. It is that they cease to be two's and three's and become a single thing, a new unity in which their minds and hearts work like one mind and heart. That one mind and heart is the heart and mind of Christ. That little company becomes, as it were, the body of Christ, a body in and through which the living Lord himself thinks

and feels and acts. There are those who can recall moments of spiritual fellowship so close, so intense, that they became aware of some transcendent presence laying hold of them, and subduing them to its own intention. Wordsworth felt in nature "a presence that disturbed him with the joy of elevated thought." There have been two's and three's who have felt a presence that semed to lift them to the threshold of the Holiest of All. Whether you call that presence the Spirit or the Living Christ is, I think, of little consequence. The early Christians did not in practice distinguish between them. St. Paul even identifies them: The Lord is the Spirit.

From this experience sprang the doctrine of the church as the Body of Christ. Here was a society that was aware of itself as an organism. It was not an aggregate of individuals like a colony of cells; it was a single thing like a multicellular organism. And in spite of its external divisions, it still retains that character. In the light of its own ideals, the church no doubt cuts a poor figure in the world. But the miracle of the church is that it still is in the world and that

it has a seemingly endless capacity for renewal. The fellowship of the disciples became an abiding and a self-propagating fact in history.

Not long ago a Finnish intellectual and rebel lay in a hospital dying. He had been very hard on the church. But one day the Archbishop Sergius of Finland heard of his condition and visited him. He was greatly moved, and this is what he wrote afterwards: "From this I realized how much warmer the church is than merely worldly people *en masse*. Sincerer, heartier, more placable, more forgiving. And I threw myself on the church, the church, the warm, the *last* warm place on earth. What would the earth be like without the church? It would suddenly lose its meaning and grow cold." For all its faults the church still preserves something of the grace of Pentecost, which can only mean that despite its faults, the Spirit of Pentecost still abides in it.

It is, however, undoubtedly true that the church has failed in recent times to offer to men that measure and quality of fellowship which their human nature calls for; and the remarkable

growth of " service " clubs in our day is due to a large extent to the need of compensation for the failure of the church in this respect. That a good deal of cant is sometimes spoken about " service," and that the clubs show a tendency to call attention to themselves and to pat themselves on the back may be true. But there is no doubt that they provide the occasion of a fellowship which is not forthcoming elsewhere and that for this fellowship there is a professedly ethical basis.

In the same fashion, there have come into being from time to time secret or quasi-secret societies for purposes of benevolence and mutual aid, and many of these have shown a persistency of life and activity which proves that the fellowship is deep rooted and powerful. It is notorious that groups and coteries which have existed for unethical purposes are extremely loose and perishable. It may be that there is " honor among thieves "; but for the most part it is honor dictated by the instinct of self-preservation. The stability of any society or brotherhood depends mainly upon an ethical quality in

the bond of association and therefore presumably in the members themselves. And in the measure that there is a moral content in this fellowship, the fellowship is reinforced and confirmed by an influence which overcomes the divisive tempers which are always present in human nature and which on slight provocation disrupt the most intimate bonds of association. It is not easy otherwise to account for the persistency and the long survival of many voluntary human associations.

9

The "Holy" Spirit

It is time that we began to gather up this somewhat wayward discussion. We have been for the most part engaged in quoting and commenting upon unusual and occasional experiences — not by any means isolated experiences, for they represent types of experience. They are however experiences which seem to be governed by no discernible law. They are not universal; they are to all appearances unpredictable; and they come and go without any semblance of

rhyme or reason. Yet they happen in every part of life. We have indeed had some reason to think that the influence which we have called the Spirit acts in a cooperative and discriminating fashion; but we have not at the moment sufficient data for saying more than that. What is quite evident is that there is an active principle at work in the living world which is accountable for these experiences, but the nature of which must still be a matter of faith. Whether you accept the traditional religious view of the nature of this power or the modern psychological explanation, your acceptance is a matter of faith.

We have seen some ground for assuming different levels of the operation of the "Spirit" in the matter of fellowship. It has been customary in the realm of religious thought to think of the Spirit as "holy," which seems to have precluded its activity in the regions usually regarded as secular. The question arises whether we have not to recognize the operations of the Spirit in areas of life which are traditionally supposed to lie outside its scope. I have already, in many of the experiences cited in this part of the discus-

sion, implied as much, and for my own part I conclude that the " Spirit " is appropriately active on all levels of life where the need arises.

I would frankly attribute to the Spirit the unconscious intelligence of the unhatched chicken which enables it to devise ways and means of escape from the egg, and in every other manifestation of the seemingly blind adaptation of means to ends on the lower levels of animal life. Indeed, when the process of biological evolution is regarded as a whole and its evident " direction " is discerned, the whole astonishing story must remain an insoluble enigma unless we can assume that somewhere in relation to it a directive influence has been at work. Even more baffling are those moments of emergence in the course of evolution, when new empirical qualities appear on the scene, unless we can postulate the activity of some principle that somehow knows what it is about. In spite of many disharmonies, the epic of life makes a rational story — and rationality in our human experience is never an accident. For myself, I would begin to trace the

operations of the " Spirit " at the first beginnings of life.

Now, the Spirit has not always found the medium in which it worked tractable. It has here and there found the material so refractory that it has abandoned it and pursued its course through another channel. There is evidence of a process of " trial and error," and the tale of life records many misfits and dead ends. There are forms of life which have been condemned to stagnation; and others which have " fallen," that is, have drifted into degeneracy. Where life loses direction, then it is caught in a blind alley, or slips into the cesspool. And how account for the loss of direction, except by the withdrawal of the " Spirit "?

But for our present purpose, the importance of the activity of the " Spirit " begins on the level of mind. From the experiences which we passed in review, it is clear that the " Spirit " has much to do in relation to those matters which we commonly designate *ultimate values,* the good, the true and the beautiful. Now the very fact that we call these the *ultimate* values means

that we decline to arrange them in a hierarchy. None the less, we do commonly ascribe the greatest honor to the saint; and on the whole we exalt the creation of beauty above the discovery of truth.

There is a sound instinct in these popular judgments. The discovery of truth is an affair of handling existing facts and deducing their relations. Science investigates and finds out the facts, classifies them, seeks out the generalizations under which they can most successfully be simplified. Philosophy still further ruminates upon these and other data of experience with the purpose of achieving a definitive view of the world as a whole. But we are all the time tethered to the past and present. Art, on the other hand, is bent on creation, on bringing forth new facts, new events. Its activity adds something new to the sum of human experience. Yet it does not normally look beyond the limits of experience in time and space. However high it soars, it is still earth-bound. But the saint is honored for distinguished qualities which are the product of his otherworldliness. He has one

foot in the world and the other in the unseen. And his place at the head of the class is justified by the circumstance that while he can be a saint without being a scientist or an artist, yet the scientist cannot be a true scientist or the artist a true artist except he possess some of the qualities of the saint.

But we have seen, as in the case of M. Poincaré, that the activity of the " Spirit " supplements that of the scientist and enables him to make new discoveries in the realm of truth. We have also seen that the " Spirit " stimulates æsthetic sensibility to the point of vision or vivid illumination and to creative activity. We have also had evidence of the stimulation by the Spirit of high ethical passion and achievement.

But " goodness " is not the main distinction of the saint, as I have already suggested. There is indeed in the world noble and fine character which seems to be unaccompanied by specific religious impulses, though, having in mind the innate perversity of human nature, I would ascribe this fineness and nobility to the operations of the Spirit. But the essential quality of

the saint is that supreme disinterestedness which is properly called " godliness." We are far too apt to use this fine word exclusively of the display of overt and active piety, whereas its true connotation is of a life lived, as our fathers would say, for the glory of God, the mainspring of which lies in what may be called " the practice of the presence of God."

As I have elsewhere pointed out, the good, the true and the beautiful are the characters of the house of life which the mind of man dreams of building in time and space; though there is in each of these an impulse which logically leads it beyond these frontiers. Beyond the possible world of goodness, truth and beauty, there is an undiscovered world of absolute worth. The saint is the man who consciously and deliberately sets out to discover this absolute worth. Mankind has heard a rumor of eternity; and the saint is the man who has believed the report and sets out on the quest.

The form which his quest takes is prayer, and this is human aspiration at its highest point. It is also the supreme expression on the human

level of the activity of the Spirit. In no human behavior is it possible to trace the operation of the Spirit on ascending levels so clearly as it is in the practice of prayer. Prayer has proved itself to be, in the course of the praying ages, capable of great elaboration and refinement. Moreover, its history begins with the history of mankind; and its essence throughout is the effort to transcend the boundaries of the actual world and to make contact with a superior reality. It would appear to be the chief and distinctive manifestation of the " Spirit " in man as opposed to what may be broadly called the " flesh." It would be a mistake to identify prayer exclusively with specific acts and forms of prayer. It is present in all disinterested effort; and though it is the tritest of pulpit commonplaces that a man's whole life should be a prayer, it is nevertheless the simple truth to say so. Only it should be added that no man's life will long continue to be a prayer if he fails to cultivate the life of prayer.

But we have seen that aspiration provokes revelation. Those swift and overwhelming per-

ceptions of truth and visions of beauty, of which we have had evidence, were the reward of those who were seeking them. The reward came in its own time and in its own fashion; but it never came gratuitously. It fell, as it were, on prepared soil. Poincaré's exacting work in mathematics, the preacher's struggle with his sermon, the cobbler's hot brooding over his map, the youth's effort to apprehend the magic of music, these were the prerequisites of revelation. The persons concerned were putting themselves in the way of a revelation. Prayer is another way of provoking a revelation; only in this case, it is a revelation of that world of absolute worth toward which it is directed, in a word, a revelation of God.[1] This revelation is what constitutes the inspiration of the prophet; and it is in this correlation of aspiration and revelation that we are to look for the secret of Jesus of Nazareth; for in him met the perfection of human aspiration and the uttermost revelation of God within the limits of flesh and blood.

[1] Upon this whole question of prayer and revelation I venture to refer the reader to the first chapter of my book *The Christian God.*

Both these movements, aspiration and revelation, on whatever level we find them, are to be ascribed to the " Spirit." But upon the highest level, namely that of prayer, we are concerned with a discovery of the unknown world of absolute worth. That is, we reach the region in which the word *holy* begins to assume its specific meaning. The sacred, as Dr. Oman has said, is the attribute of that which has absolute worth; and it evokes in us a sense of the holy. And since the activities of the Spirit on this level have to do with that which has absolute worth, we justly speak of the Holy Spirit. It is not another spirit than that which works on lower levels; but that at this level it is revealed in its true character — that is, as the Spirit of God, and for the Christian, the Spirit of God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit is then the activity of God in relation to life at all its levels, subduing the medium in and upon which it works and as it does so leading life upward from one level to another, until at last it reaches the highest possible level in this world in the prayer of the saint and the revelation of God.

I have used the words " the medium in and upon which it works "; and in doing so I imply that the facts do not warrant us in identifying the Spirit with what we call the Immanence of God. In one sense we may say that the Spirit is God immanent in the world, working creatively within life and especially in refining and sublimating human aspiration. But the range of phenomena which we have looked at requires us to postulate a certain transcendence in the relations of the Spirit to life. Unless we are to distrust our own impressions entirely, we have to conceive our visions, our discoveries, our reinforcements as originating in some power other than ourselves, certainly than our conscious selves, as being the work of some " principle of concretion," which acts upon life, as it were from without, and which functions in a somewhat different fashion from the Spirit which indwells the forms of life.

But our difficulty here is that we are applying spatial terms to the universe of mind to which they probably have no pertinency. But our minds, which cannot be conceived spatially,

have nevertheless to *operate* in terms of spatial relations, and we are continually confronted by the dilemma of " within " and " without " in all metaphysical and theological discussion. Because of the limitations within which intellectual activity has to be carried on, we are compelled to conceive of the relation of God to the world in the logically incompatible terms of transcendence and immanence, whereas it is probable that what we have to do with is a single substantial activity — which in its bearing upon personality is felt and conceived as two opposite movements — the one from within, the other from without. But though the movements appear to be in opposite directions, the circumstances which we have been reviewing in this section indicate that they are coordinate and coefficient movements. The Spirit works in us; it works upon us; and the results are to be traced in the illuminations, the discoveries, the creations and the conversions which punctuate, though irregularly, the course of life.

10

The Life of the Spirit

In this section we have in the main considered those extraordinary and abnormal moments which break in upon the habitual flow of life, high moments of vision and power and ecstasy which come to men now and again. These were precisely the phenomena from which the early Hebrews inferred the existence of the "Spirit." But in St. Paul's mind, the Greek influences to which he was subject, especially in the latter part of his life, seem to have induced an increasing emphasis upon the permanent and abiding gifts and graces of the Spirit. In the first section we noted how sober were the ecstasies into which St. Paul expected the Spirit-filled man to be led; and they were the ecstasies which should be the constant state of the Christian soul.

It is well for us that our highest moments of spiritual experience should be occasional. Mr. Housman has, as we saw, recorded his own belief that he would not be able to sustain again the poetic excitement in which the poems of *The*

Shropshire Lad were composed; and there is no doubt that there are physical and nervous limits beyond which normal flesh and blood cannot sustain great spiritual excitement without injury. Moreover, as these visitations arrive according to no known schedule, our chief business lies with those operations of the Spirit which should be a constant factor in men's lives.

(a) " The fruits of the Spirit," says St. Paul, " are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." Unless we are going to take St. Augustine's view that the virtues of the pagan are no more than splendid sins, we must ascribe all conduct and behavior of a high and spontaneous ethical quality wherever we find it to the operations of the Spirit.

It was a commonplace among the evangelical Christians of a generation or two past that the chief office of the Holy Spirit was sanctification, by which was chiefly meant the ethical refinement of the individual; and we modern Christians make much less than we should of the need and possibility of " growing in grace." We have of late been setting up before us the steep and ex-

acting demands of the Christian ethic and have found ourselves helpless in the face of them. It might be useful to remind ourselves that the Christian life is an affair of seed growing secretly; and that we are not likely to rise to the heights of the Christian ideal except by one step after another. It is the office of the Spirit to help our infirmities here as elsewhere; and, unless the testimony of the saints is misleading, it does.

It is a source of great weakness that in modern evangelical Christendom, the conception of spiritual growth — implying a corresponding moral growth — should have come to play so little part in the religious life. We have had, to be sure, holiness movements, conventions for the deepening of the spiritual life and the like; but these have in general been so closely associated with rigid orthodoxies and with private and *ad hoc* interpretations of the Scriptures that they have failed to justify themselves except to certain types of pietistic temperament. This is a region which might well be explored anew, for there is in it a body of teaching that calls only for restatement in practical terms to become a

source of steady spiritual reinforcement and moral growth.

And this is indeed much needed. There has been of recent years a good deal of pseudo-psychological exploitation of the idea of "power." The ideal set before us is that familiar personage of the sentimental novel, the "strong, silent man," who in business, in politics, in adventure, in the detection of crime, is equal to every emergency, has uncanny intuitions and is capable generally of superhuman feats. The modern quackery invites us to cultivate "mind-power," or "will-power," or whatever the particular slogan is, so that we may be enabled to cut just such a dashing figure on the social or commercial stage. You have only to follow the method prescribed in the book, price one dollar, or in the more ambitious instances to attend a course of lessons at say twenty dollars. There is a superman itching under the skin of most men, and it is an attractive idea to unleash this superman, and cheap at the price. The "method" is guaranteed to bring us fame and fortune.

Now there is some truth in all this. There are, as we have seen, unutilized resources of power in all of us; and it is unfortunate that we do not know how to release them. But these methods are in the end only variations on the theme of our old friend "auto-suggestion." While auto-suggestion has value within limits, it may become a sort of living on one's psychical capital which leaves one exhausted and listless. Besides in the particular instances in question, we are invited to use auto-suggestion for purely self-regarding ends; and in that there is lying in wait for the deluded person who attempts it not only exhaustion but sheer mental and moral insolvency.

Over against this charlatanism, it is necessary to set the New Testament doctrine of personal growth, which is growth primarily in grace — which as applied to men and women is the sum of those qualities which St. Paul designates as the fruits of the Spirit — and growth in power only for the enhancement and the practical expression of these qualities. What is more, the apparent vogue of "mind-power" and the like

quackery seems to indicate a widespread sense of personal inadequacy, which is, however, only to be rationally and healthily met by the New Testament view of the place of the Spirit in relation to life.

(b) There is a memorable passage of St. Paul in which he speaks of the Spirit as the organ of spiritual discernment and discrimination: "Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things." It is a spirit of insight which is able to distinguish between the true and the false, the passing and the permanent — a point of view for the interpretation of life. In other words, the Spirit within us establishes a scale of values. Its full effect is to enable us to view the world as a sacrament. St. Paul tells us that it is one of the offices of the Spirit to reveal to us "the things that are freely given to us of God." But are not all things freely given to us of God? And is not that their very point, the last word about one and all of them? The flower of the

field, the play of light in a precious stone, my breakfast, the music of running water, the street lamp are so many points of contact between me and God. We never see anything in its whole truth until it kindles in us a thought of God. Yet that is precisely what we miss in these gifts and why we despise or misuse the world.

Take money, for instance. Some men worship money, others waste it. Both are missing the point of it. Money is neither to be worshiped nor wasted. It is a gift of God for rational human use; it is also something to worship and to glorify God with. A coin and a dollar bill are symbols of economic " value." But no man has seen economic value at any time any more than he has seen God. Economic " value " is a mystical thing, created by the toil of man out of the gift of God in nature.

A coin is so much minted grace. A dollar bill is a sacramental thing, not to be handled lightly or irreverently or to be squandered with levity. A bank should be a kind of temple, and the banker a sort of priest, a minister of holy things.

There will be such a thing as a sacrament of banking when we admit the Spirit into our banking practice; and eye hath not seen nor hath ear heard nor have entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for bankers that love him. And for merchants that love him. We shall have a real world of business, and not the confused commercial scramble we know, when we have understood that all business is at last the business of God. Our business transactions will then partake of the nature of acts of worship; and indeed, even as it is, for a man, who calls himself a Christian, no business transaction is safe in which he does not worship God. " The true scholar goes to his desk as to an altar," and so should the business man go to his office and the doctor to his consulting room, the cook to her kitchen and the cobbler to his last. That is the spiritual conduct of life.

It is a far cry to that kind of world; and meantime there is a score of ways in which the Spirit, if we will let it have its way with us, will correct our judgments of value. God knows we need it. Not long ago I read in a book, " There

is an account of a journalist who went to interview the Almighty. He found him interested in the little gardens of the poor, where they try to bring beauty into ugly places. There were tears in his eyes." I wonder whether this little fancy is not a real test of spiritual insight. Does it make sense to you? I confess that I do not find it difficult to believe that God is moved by the little gardens of the poor, by the aspiration of beauty struggling with adversity. For so far as we can see, it was for things like that, for the realization of that kind of "value," that he brought this sum of things into being. The most precious things in his sight are the humble student, spending laborious nights and days to spell out some syllable of the unutterable Word, the penitence of a sinner, the cup of cold water in Christ's name, the widow's mite, things like these that never get into the headlines or for that matter even into the footnotes. God in all things, truly, for the spiritual mind, as Francis Thompson said,

"Lo here! Lo there! Ah me, lo everywhere;"

yet most manifestly in the succour of fallen sparrows, in

> "A picket frozen on duty,
> A mother starved for her brood,
> Socrates drinking the hemlock,
> And Jesus on the rood."

We, in our worship of the big, the noisy, the spectacular, the pomp of power and the glitter of the passing show, need the eye-opening of the Spirit that shall show God nearest in the weak things of the world, in the nobodies and the nothings that have loving hearts, who grow flowers for Him that there may be beauty among men. The modern man is for the most part standing on his head, and his scale of values is upside down. He needs the Spirit of God to set him on his feet.

(c) Related to this is the office of the Spirit in ministering to the joy of life. One of our great needs nowadays is to clear our minds about the nature of possession. There is possession which is to have the outward control of things; there is also possession which is to have inward

enjoyment of things. Let us call the former *ownership* and the latter *possession*. Possession is not necessary to ownership. A man may own a great picture, but it does not follow that he possesses it. A poor man who cannot afford to buy a good picture for himself may possess a picture which another man owns. For he has the picture reproduced in his soul. It says deep and gladdening things to him that its owner never hears; and while the owner has to keep it on his walls, the other man may take it with him wherever he goes. For a picture is not a thing to be owned but to be enjoyed; and it is the man who enjoys it who possesses it. The owner of many things may be the possessor of none of them; indeed, there is real danger that he who owns many things may come to be owned by them. Possession is spiritual enjoyment. A modern novelist has put it in this way — "Life is a number of little things intensely realised." Contrary to the modern sense of the term, our "real estate" is in our minds, and that is the only real estate that there is — except that this grace of spiritual possession makes the whole world your real

estate. Then " all things," according to St. Paul, " are yours."

What that old Welsh parson of the seventeenth century, Thomas Traherne, tells of his own childhood should be in its essence true for all men at all times of life, and would be, were they but indwelt by the Spirit:

" All appeared new, and strange at first, inexpressibly sure and delightful and beautiful. I was a little stranger, which at my entrance into the world was surrounded and saluted with innumerable joys. My knowledge was divine. . . . All things were spotless and pure and glorious; yea and infinitely mine and joyful and precious. . . . I saw all in the peace of Eden: Heaven and earth did sing my creator's praises, and could not make more melody to Adam than to me. All time was eternity, and a perpetual Sabbath. . . .

" The corn was orient and immortal wheat which never should be reaped nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting. The dust and stones of the street were as precious as gold; the gates were at first the

end of the world. The green trees when I saw them first through one of the gates transported and ravished me; their sweetness and unusual beauty made my heart to leap, and almost mad with ecstasy, they were such strange and wonderful things. The men! Oh, what venerable and reverend creatures did the aged seem! Immortal cherubim! And young men glittering and sparkling together, and maids strange seraphic pieces of life and beauty. Boys and girls tumbling in the streets and playing were moving jewels. I knew not that they were born or should die. But all things abided eternally as they were in their proper places. Eternity was manifest in the light of the day, and something infinite behind everything appeared; which talked with my expectation and moved my desire. The city seemed to stand in Eden or to be built in heaven. The streets were mine, the temple was mine, the people were mine, their clothes and gold and silver were mine, as much as their sparkling eyes, fair skins and ruddy faces. The skies were mine and so were the sun and moon and stars, and all the World was mine; and I the only spectator and enjoyer of it."

PART III

The Spirit in Relation to Thought and Practice

I

The Spirit and God

The doctrine of the Trinity is tacitly — and sometimes overtly — acknowledged by reflective evangelical Christians to be something of an embarrassment. It has indeed become deeply entrenched in the orthodox Christian tradition; but its survival, in spite of its great difficulty, must indicate that there are elements of truth in it which would be lost if, on the one hand, we turned to a simple Deism, or, on the other, to a form of Pantheism. It is noteworthy that many devout evangelical thinkers of the liberal school see no way of escape in the only practical present alternative — Unitarianism.

The strength of the doctrine of the Trinity lies partly in that it seems to preserve in a symbolic form the virtues of the two conceptions of transcendence and immanence. No doubt this receives some reinforcement from the feeling — it

can hardly be called a formulated view — that deity is a higher category of life than personality, and that the doctrine of the Trinity does again symbolically suggest that deity is in some sense super-personal. This seems to be the idea underlying Mr. Clement Webb's suggestion that we should speak of Personality *in* God rather than of the Personality of God; and that since personality is essentially social in its nature, we must needs also speak of Society in God, which accords well enough with the notion of a trinity of persons so closely integrated as to coexist within the one divine substance. But why only a trinity? Why not a plurality, such as McTaggart suggests — a number of persons living in the unity of a perfect love?

But it cannot be pretended that these late apologetic interpretations of the Trinity pay much attention to the historical origin of the doctrine. The leading fact that led to the formulation of the doctrine was that the Greek Fathers found on their hands three divine beings to whom personal attributes and activities were ascribed in the New Testament. There was God, whom

Jesus had called the Father; there was Jesus himself regarded as the divine Logos in flesh and blood; and there was the Spirit. Now the distinction between the risen and living Lord and the Spirit were not always well-defined; and on occasions they were actually identified. And there were on record also words in which Jesus was reported to have affirmed his identity with the Father. "I and the Father are one." Here then was unity and trinity.

Now, as Professor Baillie has pointed out, the notion of three-ness in relation to Deity is not confined to Christianity. It is found in other religions; and in ancient literature and symbols it appears to have had a currency which indicates a very early origin. But it is impossible to tell how far the Greek Fathers were unconsciously affected by this circumstance. What is quite certain is that their solution of the matter was mainly determined by the Hellenistic cast of their own minds. They had certain categories to their hands and they solved their problem by casting Father, Son and Holy Spirit into these categories.

But in doing so they did some violence to their own categories. Speaking strictly, the Stoic *logos* corresponds much more closely to the Spirit, as its character and office are described in the Scriptures, than it does to the Son. But the term Logos — having traveled into Christianity by way of Alexandria and somewhat modified on its way, owing probably to Philo's handling of it, had already been identified with the Son of God; and the Greek Fathers had to accept the situation as they found it.

But the final formula which they achieved is really a tautology which, analyzed, turns out to be a logical nullity; for its two major terms are synonyms. They said there were three "hypostases" in one "ousia." Now "hypostasis" and "ousia" really mean the same thing, and you may translate the formula as "three substances in one substance" or "three essences in one essence" — which does not seem a very explicit statement of the matter in hand.

When the Latin Fathers came to work upon the matter, they translated the word hypostasis as *persona,* from which we draw our word *person.*

This was much more definite than the Greek Fathers intended; but probably a good deal less definite than it has become in the course of time. For the word *persona* means a mask and presumably was intended to convey the idea that the physical presence was a mask behind which the soul was hidden. But if the Greek Fathers had meant anything of that kind, they would not have used the word *hypostasis* but the word *prosōpon,* and possibly it would have been better if they had done so. In its early use the latter word signified a man's face, his appearance *vis-à-vis* with you. It was only later that it came to signify a person in anything like our modern sense, and even then it did not represent the somewhat rigidly outlined entity which we have conceived personality to be.

The notion that seems uppermost in the word is *Presence;* and perhaps that word supplies the clue that we want. Possibly the true trinitarian formula should be " three Presences in one substance " — if we want a formula at all. For that at any rate is the essential truth of experience which the Trinitarian doctrine reflects. The

divine Being was manifested in three characteristic " presences " — the transcendent Presence whom, unseen, we worship, the Father who is in heaven, the Real Other to whom we address our prayers — the unique Incarnate Presence in flesh and blood, Jesus Christ — and the active Presence in the world of life which is the Spirit and which is identified by its characteristic ministries of illumination, reinforcement and creation.

This really brings us back to the New Testament position. There is no rigidity in the relations of the Father, Son and Spirit as we find them reflected in the New Testament; for there we are not greatly troubled by Hellenistic metaphysics. The writers are expounding their experience in the terms that are to their hands; and the utmost we can say is that their experience seemed to indicate God in various " presences." It is not unlikely that, at bottom, the hold which the doctrine of the Trinity still continues to have upon many emancipated religious minds is that an undifferentiated Godhead, " a bare and abstract oneness," as Professor Baillie calls it, does

not satisfy those requirements in the thought of God that our experience calls for. There must be in God that which corresponds to the range and variety of our religious experience; and the early church expressed its sense of this by speaking of the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

I am not for a moment suggesting that, in this reinterpretation of the Trinitarian position, there is a completely defensible philosophical position. I am simply attempting to get at the living truth of the early Christian view of certain distinctions within the Godhead, and necessarily can offer no more than a rough approximation. That is the most we can ever hope for in this region, where from the nature of the case sharply outlined definitions are impossible. And it is to be remembered that just as the Greek Fathers made their definition sharper than that of the New Testament, and the Latin Fathers made their definition sharper than that of the Greeks, so since then the definition has grown harder than even the Latin Fathers intended. The Trinitarian formula as it is held by conventional ortho-

doxy takes us a long way beyond the New Testament position. What we actually need at the moment is the elasticity of the New Testament view, which really means that we need to recover the religious experiences which give life and significance to that view.

On this view, the Spirit is the divine Presence at large in the world. In our survey of the activity of the Spirit we have ranged far and wide outside the specifically religious field, and have had reason to believe that the domain of the Spirit includes the so-called secular no less than the religious areas of life. This divine Presence we trace all the way up from the emergences in the course of biological evolution and the evidences of intelligence in forms of life which lack the organs of such intelligence, up at last to the highest aspirations of the human soul and to the revelations which these aspirations provoke — the region in which the Spirit may properly be designated " holy."

2

The Spirit and Man

Perhaps we do less than justice to Nietzsche today because in our estimate of him we fasten too exclusively on his worship of power. But he did one important service — he recalled us to the truth that man as he is today is not the last term of biological evolution. He maintained that out of present man, "by a favorable accumulation and augmentation of human powers and arrangements," it would be possible to develop a "superman." In these days, when we have become familiar with the doctrine of "emergence," this view is no longer startling. But to those who first heard it, it had the effect of novelty.

Not indeed that it was novel. For St. Paul held a similar doctrine, though the "superman" whom he saw was of a different kind from that of Nietzsche. In his distinction between the natural and the spiritual man, St. Paul suggests that there is possible a higher type of manhood than man as the product of what we call

" nature." In his table of emergents, Lloyd Morgan uses the word *spirit* to describe the next higher level to *mind;* which seems to accord with St. Paul's thought of " first the natural, then the spiritual." As I have argued elsewhere, Lloyd Morgan's doctrine of emergence appears to be inexplicable upon the basis of the pure naturalism which he professes and requires something like Whitehead's " principle of concretion " to complete it. For Whitehead, God is this " principle of concretion." I would suggest that the spirit best expresses that " presence " of God which is the actual " principle of concretion " and accounts for the phenomenon of emergence. From inanimate matter to life, from life to mind — it is the coefficient action of the travailing spirit within and the " concreting " spirit upon the process that has carried the movement forward in its step-like advance. And if St. Paul and Lloyd Morgan are right in describing the empirical quality of the next higher level as *spirit,* then we may suggest that the effort of " the Spirit " in the evolutionary movement of life is to bring forth a being in which it

may completely express itself under terrestrial conditions.

And indeed the Spirit may be said to have achieved such a being. It is not necessary here to recall passages in which Jesus is represented as being indwelt and guided by the "Spirit"; and we need not here wait to make fine theological distinctions or identifications. Whether we speak of Jesus as the Logos or the Spirit Incarnate, it comes in effect to the same thing. The distinction of Jesus lies in the uniqueness of the divine manifestation in him. But it is to be remembered that that is a distinction, which, according to the Scriptures, he is at last to share with his brethren, who are "predestined to be conformed to his image," many of whom he will lead to glory and who will sit with him in his throne. He is the prototype and forerunner of a race of "spiritual" men. That indeed St. Paul says with some explicitness: "The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a life-giving spirit." There is a succession of "nature" of which the archetype and origin is the first man; there is a plane and a succession of

" spirit " of which Jesus is the supreme manifestation. Of that higher plane, there were foreshadowings before him; in him it was definitely achieved.

We may then with propriety describe the Pauline distinction of soul and spirit as describing lower and higher emergent levels in the interior life of man. But there is another distinction in this connection which seems to express more, namely the distinction of *flesh and spirit*. The one thing that may be stated at once and definitely is that the *flesh* is not to be identified with the *body*. Another thing that may be said is that the term *flesh* does not necessarily have an evil connotation. The antithesis of flesh and spirit is not primarily ethical, unless we include in our conception of moral evil everything that hinders the realization of the " spiritual life." In Galatians 3:3, St. Paul equates the " works of the law " with the " flesh " — which indicates that the " flesh " may mean well and honestly seek a righteousness to which, however (as St. Paul believed), it could not attain. *Flesh* is St. Paul's way of speaking of a principle of life and

conduct, the principle on which the natural man carries himself, whether at his best or at his worst.

To be sure, St. Paul does categorically ascribe evil behavior to the "flesh." "The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revelings, and such like." But equally he includes under the flesh, not only the works of the law, but other things which do not necessarily call for moral condemnation. Those things which gave him "confidence in the flesh," his ancestry, his inheritance, his upbringing, his standing, his religious record, are not things which we should describe as evil, except only as they militate against the spirit by becoming objects of pride.

In general, it is safe to say that the flesh represents the egocentric principle and conduct of life. In religion and ethics, it represents the notion that a man may be saved by his own effort and performance, by the good that he does, by

keeping the law, by discharging his duty. But it is also the principle which expresses itself in base and selfish conduct, in self-indulgence, in vicious and anarchic behavior. In either case, the impulse is self-regarding; and it aims at self-satisfaction — in the one case in the sphere of religious and moral obligation, in the other case, in the indulgence of sense or of pride or of self-esteem. To be sure, even on the better side, there was always present the danger of a sinful pride; but it would be excessive to say that it was always inevitable.

But in St. Paul's use of the term flesh, there is also associated with it the idea of externality, with reference particularly to the means by which the flesh acts and the objects to which it is directed. In his own case, these external goods or instruments were of two kinds. On the one hand were his inheritance — his race, his blue blood (he was of the tribe of Benjamin), his family tradition. On the other hand were the institutions to which he gave his devotion — the synagogue and the law; and these were the things that he came to count well lost

for Christ. By and for these things he had lived.

But there are external things other than these and less worthy for which men may spend their lives. The pleasures of sense, power, fame, wealth are equally, perhaps more definitely within the universe of the "flesh." This externality is the note of the life of the flesh in its whole range. The natural man seeks his satisfactions in concrete, objective things. Not alone in the pleasures of sense, but even in the upper reaches of his life, he is dominated by the same bias. He looks for religious finality in concrete, clear-cut embodiments of truth underwritten by the authority of tradition. His moral standard is an external code. A scale of values and a rule of duty determined by a concrete immediacy of experience, traditionalism in thought and religious belief, legalism in morality — these are the working principles of the natural man at his best.

But let us do full justice to them. It is easy and cheap to sneer at creeds and codes. But they are in their essence the perfectly sound endeavor to secure the values which the experience

of men in religion and in conduct has revealed to be worthy of preservation. The early codes of law were simply systematic records of customs and usages which had proved useful and valuable to the well-being of the community; and it was well to put them on record. They helped to define the ground gained by the moral consciousness in its effort to overcome moral anarchy and confusion. In the same way a creed is a record of religious truth in so far as men discern it at the time; and the creed is worth formulating in order to preserve the truth as it had been then recognised. But the danger of the creed and the code is that men may tend to claim for them a finality and an absoluteness which does not belong to them. Then they become occasions of stagnation. The code is taken to represent the maximum of moral obligation, whereas it was at best a minimum. The creed is taken as a statement of religious truth which is binding for all time without addition or change. In both cases, what should have been a stepping-stone has been turned into a millstone around the neck of the religious mind and the moral will.

And all growth is hindered, even if not wholly prevented.

Now St. Paul's conversion was at bottom a deliverance from this kind of bondage into the freedom of the Spirit. Henceforth for him, the external code was replaced by an inner principle of behavior. The legalist Saul becomes Paul who blazed new trails for the good life. This child of ancient orthodoxy is turned into an arch-heretic and the protagonist of a new insurgent faith. His new freedom did not lead him into any kind of anarchy; for the Spirit which made him free supplies with the freedom its necessary disciplines. The first fruit of the Spirit, according to St. Paul's own testimony, is Love.

There is some analogy between St. Paul's experience and the recurrent uprisings of Romanticism against a classical tradition with which we meet in literature and art. But into this we may not enter further here than to suggest that the romantic revivals are also the fruit of this same Spirit — which, whatever else it may be, is not a spirit of stagnation.

What then the Spirit does for a man when it

emancipates him from the bondage of tradition and convention and institutions and habit is to implant in him an inner principle which is autonomous and self-directing, by which he is enabled to transcend the limits of creed and code, and which is forever trying to outdo its own best. This is indeed only to say that the spirit has supplanted the flesh and become both a free creative and exploring activity and a moral discipline within the man's life.

Paul's conversion is the classic instance of one type of personal revolution. St. Augustine and St. Francis of Assisi represent other types; and probably the relative place of the various elements — ethical, intellectual and emotional — in the revolution varies in every case. But the product in each case is substantially the same — the only variations being those which derive from the temperamental inheritance of the individual concerned. It is the emergence of a free, self-governing and self-directing individual who, however, in the process of revolution receives a definite ethical direction. The law is written in his mind and heart; for the rest he

makes his own life. Love God, as St. Augustine says, and do as you please. That is the freedom of the spiritual man.

From this it follows that the spiritual man has attained to a complete individuality. He is *himself,* as the natural man cannot be. It is not to be supposed that the invasion of the individual by the Spirit supplants the individuality of the man. On the contrary, it accentuates and enthrones it. The tendency of law and custom is towards uniformity of type, to flatten out all natural variations; and unless the individual is naturally of the rebel (or as Trotter in *The Instincts of the Herd* put it, the unstable) temperament, he is slowly but remorselessly pressed into the average mould. But his emancipation from the bondage of law and custom gives his individuality an opportunity to unfold and to express itself, to make him his own man.

But it does more than that for him. One part of his inheritance is the herd-instinct. It is not necessary here to enter into any discussion of the herd-mind, as it has been much canvassed in recent years; and especially in the years of the

war, we had a surprising revelation of its prevalence. When the multitude considers its institutions or its customary technique of life imperiled, it is easily stampeded into a panic in which intelligence is suspended. Passion takes the place of thought; and emotion passes for reflection. The catchword of the moment becomes the law and the prophets. To some extent, education is a corrective of the herd-mind. But we saw in the war years that it was no security against it. For there were men of education who lost their heads and shouted with the credulous and furious mob. But the Spirit does finally deliver a man from this unhappy entail and sets him up on his own independent feet.

Of this, one important effect is that it makes the individual capable of the noblest fellowship. After all, the herd-instinct has this much value, that it is in a sense the raw material of fellowship. But in order to convert it into a true fellowship, the individual must be a free man. The " natural " man is not psychologically free, he is always liable to answer the call of the herd; and the herd is moved either by fear or by appetite.

Under the influence of the herd-instinct, a man is always less than a whole man. To be sure, there is another extreme in which the same effect is produced. The natural man may be "organized" into an institution, in which he forfeits some measure of his freedom and his human wholeness.

It is interesting to note that in nature there are two types of community. At the very beginnings of life, you have the loose colonial organization of cells and the multicellular organism. In the one, the cells cluster together, still retaining their individual wholeness and able to withdraw from the colony and live an independent life. In the other, by being specialized for certain functions, the cells have lost their individual wholeness and can no longer withdraw from the organism. The same difference reproduces itself higher up, as between the herd and the hive. In the loose formation of the herd, individuality is preserved at the cost of unity; in the hive, the unity is achieved at the cost of individuality. There is no such thing as a whole bee-personality. The queen, the drones and the

workers are all specialized kinds of bee with distinct functions; and they are capable of no other. The ideal society is that in which neither individuality nor unity is sacrificed, but the full value of both is preserved. It will be found in a fellowship of free spirits bound together in love. That kind of society the church was meant to be but is not; and its failure has always been due to a shortage in its spiritual life. And to-day, it is torn between the hive of Romanism and the herds of Protestantism. We register then our conclusion that the freedom of the Spirit makes for a complete individuality and a perfect fellowship.

The psychological aspects of the relation of the Spirit to the human person make a difficult question, though not necessarily more difficult than any other psychological problem. There are many unsolved problems in the region of human relationships; and if we cannot give a lucid and impregnable account of the relation of the Spirit to man, we are in no worse case than the psychologist is when he begins to discuss any of the experiences which were recounted in the

second part of this book. For the greater part, the psychologist can offer us little more than intelligent guess-work.

We have already concluded that personality, whatever its exact nature may be, is penetrable — that it is not a walled and gateless city. Men are not like billiard balls that can only touch each other at a single point. We may more fitly describe them as circles that intersect one another; but then circles have circumferences. And it is a moot question whether persons have circumferences. Apparently they have centers — but there are phenomena which suggest that they have no definite periphery. The facts of telepathy, of mind-reading, of second-sight still await a satisfactory explanation. There is that curious circumstance, observed times without number, of the appearance in separate places at the same time of a new idea, of the strange synchronism of great discoveries made independently by different persons — as in the discovery of the evolution hypothesis by Russell Wallace and Charles Darwin. These things seem to be, as we say, " in the air," they strike this man here

and that man there; and each man thinks it his own independent discovery. We can only suppose that there is a continuum of life of which we are all severally concretions, and that, while we exist separately, we are yet vitally in contact with the whole. Just as the invention of wireless revealed to us a means of sensory communication of which we were wholly ignorant, so there probably are in the mental world means of communication which we are unaware of — though we may suspect their existence — but which do bring us unexpected news. Personality, it would appear, is like Zechariah's Jerusalem, a city without walls, and is open to the approaches of the Spirit on every side. A man may however build walls around himself and resist the Spirit.

That the Spirit is chiefly communicated to one person through another is undoubtedly true. But we must not preclude the possibilities of direct communication or of other mediating agencies. Brother Lawrence's spiritual life was kindled by the sight of a tree in its winter bareness. But the normal channels of the spiritual life flow from person to person — from parent

to child, from friend to friend, from teacher to pupil. Some persons are specially endowed with this gift of communication, and not necessarily by deliberate or conscious effort. There are people who are spiritually radio-active, who appear to kindle and to reinforce life in those whom they touch. But there is no obvious reason why any man may not be radio-active in this way. If the Spirit has kindled its own life in him, he in his own measure is necessarily so.

3

The Spirit and the Church

" Know ye not," said St. Paul to the Corinthian church, " that ye are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? " And he tells the Ephesians that they were being " builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit." It has already been pointed out that it is impossible to draw a hard and fast line between the living Christ and the Spirit in the New Testament. In the Fourth Gospel, the Spirit appears quite clearly as the substitute of Christ: " If I

go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you." Perhaps we have in the Fourth Gospel an effort to clear up the ambiguity in which St. Paul had left the position of the living Christ and the Spirit in relation to the church, though it does not seem to have been altogether successful. But what is clear is that the church is regarded throughout the New Testament as being the habitation and the organ of the Spirit. In the Book of Acts, we have seen, the Spirit is the mind and life of the church.

Now, I am not here concerned to formulate any doctrine of the church. But it is not possible to avoid observing the *high* view of the church which the New Testament consistently takes. It appears to be the organ of the perpetual presence of Christ in the world. He is not in the world merely as a formless memorial sentiment, but as a creative and redeeming activity, indwelling a body. The church, says Bishop Gore, is the extension of the Incarnation. The eternal Christ who appeared in the world in a body of flesh in Jesus of Nazareth continues in the world

in a body of people in the church. He is with us not as an atmosphere or an influence or an ideal, but as a Presence indwelling the church as the soul indwells the body.

The difficulty with this view lies in its wide discrepancy from the actual aspect of the church at any given point in history. Admittedly, the church does not today cut a very impressive figure in the world; and its critics are not slow to fasten upon its faults and frailties. It is, they tell us, feeble, cowardly, querulous, divisive, ineffectual and so forth. But in all probability, it has always seemed to be so to its contemporaries. Nor is this to be wondered at. For it has always been constituted of the same human nature as it is today. It is and always has been made up of men and women who are at once self-assertive and sensitive, who hurt each other and manage out of the most trivial occasions to engender an astonishing amount of bad blood. These same men and women, moreover, are all more or less smitten with pride of mind and are obstinate in their own opinions, and when there is a clash of opinion, the church is divided against itself and

is reducd to impotency. The marvel is that the church has so long survived the antisocial tempers and habits of its members and their endemic controversies. To be sure, the church has not been without fault: and there have been passages in its history so discreditable, so dark, that one can understand such an outburst as Voltaire's *Ecrasez l'infame!* But none the less, it is still here despite the faithlessness of its friends and the violence of its enemies. " Sire," said Theodore of Beza to King Henry of Navarre, " it belongs to the church, in the name whereof I speak, to receive blows rather than to give them. But it will please Your Majesty to remember that this is an anvil which has worn out many hammers."

The last century and a half has been one of the most difficult and distressing periods in the history of the church. It has been torn asunder again and again by internal dissension. Its faith has been assailed and unsettled by new knowledge. Its spirit has been invaded and choked by the unrelenting pressure of a surrounding materialism. Yet, despite these circumstances, this same period has seen the greatest missionary

expansion of the church; and it has seen the awakening in the church of a vision of a Christian social order in the world. The period is closing with a strong impulse towards the reunion of Christendom. When, five hundred years hence, the church historian reviews this period, it will probably seem to him to have been one of the great heroic and adventurous epochs in the life of the church. This astonishing persistency of the church needs some explanation: and besides this, its seemingly infinite capacity for renewal. The story of the church is punctuated with revivals and reformations. As the Puritan said of " the perseverance of the saints," the life of the church is an endless series of new beginnings. At any given moment, the church cuts a sorry figure in the light of its own ideal; but, seen in due perspective, it is the most impressive spectacle in the world.

The late Josiah Royce speaks of the Beloved Community as a community of memory and hope. It is, so far as it goes, a true description of the church. It is a community with a past; it has a history. It lives in the memory of high

heroic moments. There is a cross for ever in its mind; there is an Upper Room built into its spiritual fabric. There have been martyrdoms that have been the seed of the church. But it is also a community of hope. It has not only a past but a future, not only a history but a destiny. But in all this, we are looking at the church, as it were, on the flat, moving along the horizontal plane of time. But this is not the real distinction of the church. It shares this horizontal life with all human institutions. Its distinction lies in its *vertical* life. It is a community of memory and hope; even more it is a community of *aspiration* and *revelation.*

It is a community of aspiration, a worshiping, praying society. Here on this plane of time, it tries to take eternity by storm. Here amid the press of visible things it seeks an invisible world. Here on the level of nature, it seeks to achieve a life of the Spirit. And here is its first and essential note. Probably the church never came nearer a true apprehension of itself as the body of Christ than it did in the period from say 1170 to 1225, that period which brought forth

among other wonders Francis of Assisi. The paradox of that period is that while ecclesiastical statecraft was making those tragic mistakes which finally made the Reformation inevitable, there was an astonishing resurgence of spiritual life; and one of its main manifestations was in the character of its architecture. Up to that time, the prevailing style was Norman, and its notes were massiveness and solidity. It was a noble survival of the old Roman idea of building for eternity, building things to last as long as time. But they spoke — those great Norman structures — of the church as an institution, something that stood squarely and permanently in the world, an abiding historical corporation. But then comes the change. Gothic makes its appearance. The peculiar quality of Gothic is that it makes one look upward — not back to the past or forward into the future, but up to heaven. Gothic is aspiration translated into stone. Norman architecture expressed the horizontal life of the church, Gothic its vertical life. Its peculiar genius is aspiration.

But because it is a community of aspiration,

it is also a community of revelation. For these two things are never separate. Never an aspiration but provokes a revelation; never a revelation but provokes an aspiration. Now, the core of this revelation is a gospel — good news of a heavenly Father and a heavenly Kingdom, an everlasting mercy, a grace that saves to the uttermost, and a truth that makes men free — and all this coming with an assurance and an immediacy as satisfying and as living as it did to the multitude on the day of Pentecost. It is one of the reasons why the gospel is still a living thing in the world that there has been in the world a community of aspiration which in every age has heard the gospel for itself, not as an echo out of the past but as a word from heaven.

Naturally, because the church is a community of revelation, it is also a community of testimony. Necessity is laid upon it to pass the word along. The light that comes to it, it is to make to shine before men. The grace and truth which it receives it is not to enjoy in selfish isolation but to share with a race in need.

Here then is the church's vital activity, aspi-

ration, revelation, testimony; and it is hardly necessary to point out how it reproduces the essentials of Pentecost. The aspiration of the Upper Room was completed by the revelation and the testimony of Pentecost. Herein lies the true apostolic succession. The continuity of the life of the church has not been preserved, as is confidently affirmed in certain quarters, by the historical succession of a hieratic class. That is to make the church's life to depend upon historical externality, and the line of succession, even at that, is very doubtful. The continuity of the church's life through the centuries has come down along the broad stream of the prayers and the pieties of worshiping companies, a multitude that no man can number of common and anonymous folk who have kept the altar fires alight and handed on the testimony from generation to generation. The life of the church is the life of the Spirit, manifesting itself in the two coefficient activities of Aspiration and Revelation, and expressing itself to the world in a continual renewal of testimony; and we need no other principle of continuity to explain the life

of the church than the presence of the Spirit in the church.

The presence of the Spirit in the church is also the energy of cohesion which keeps it a community, in spite of divisive tendencies latent in human nature, and when the community begins to break up, it is directly traceable to a shortage of spiritual life. There is a lake I know which in the spring shows a clean and unbroken sheet of water; but by the end of August, the level of the water has so fallen that its surface is broken all over by sharp points of rock. The church is composed of frail, angular folk, but when its spiritual level is high, our pride and pugnacity are drowned out of sight in deep waters; when the level falls, our sharp points and rough edges appear and break the peace and the fellowship of the church. Euodias and Syntyche would not have fallen out at Philippi or the Corinthian church have broken apart into quarreling cliques, if there had not been a failure of spirituality in those churches.

Controversies in the church are symptoms of a low vitality; and when we begin to be at odds

with one another, if we had any spiritual discernment, instead of fighting it out, we should begin to pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit. When men are more eager to make their own opinions prevail than they are for the peace and fellowship of the church, their trouble is not intolerance or dogmatism but a deficit of spiritual life — they have not had recent contacts with the Holy Spirit.

Not only so, they are unconsciously fighting against the truth of God. During the crisis in Scotland about church union in the early years of this century, Dr. Alexander Whyte said a memorable thing: "For the restraint of controversy and the reign of peace and for the life of love, for my part, I would willingly become almost all things to all men. But you will say to me in triumph, that truth is truth, and so it is. But I say also — and I more and more feel it — that love is love. And I have the highest authority for it that love is the fulfilling of the law, the law of truth, the law of duty and every other law." He might have added that one can only find and speak and act the truth where there is

love, and that there is in the spirit of controversy that which makes one careless of truthfulness.

The fellowship that the church should always be depends upon the continued indwelling of the Spirit; and when, because the Spirit is not sought, the fellowship falls apart, then the truth itself is lost, and everything else that matters is lost. The bearing of all this upon the present discussions of church union is obvious. The reunion of churches is not an affair of skillful accommodation and compromise; it is a matter of raising the level of spiritual life in the churches until it overflows the dividing hills.

It is worth observing how sacrosanct was the fellowship in the early days. The sin of Ananias was breach of fellowship, a double breach — for not only did he break the voluntary covenant of the mutual sharing of goods, but he also lied about it. And he was regarded as having lied to the Holy Ghost. And it is something of the same attitude that is reflected in St. Paul's grim words: "If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

4

The Church and the World

Though the hands of the church be lifted beyond the stars, its feet are none the less on the solid ground of earth.

There is a drawing by William Blake, in which a very small man stands, with hands uplifted, at the foot of a ladder which reaches from the earth to the moon. The inscription on the drawing is, "I want, I want." Blake meant his drawing to be a comment on man. He saw man as an incarnate want. He wants, and like the proverbial Irishman, does not know what he wants and will not be happy until he gets it.

Many of the things he wants, he can supply for himself. He can go out and find food and clothing, shelter, light and heat, the wants of his bodily life. But men cannot live by bread alone. He has a hungry mind, and for this he must find other bread. So he has invented books and pictures, music and drama. He has taught himself to find sustenance in the sights and sounds of nature, and he has to his credit a noble and varied

cultural achievement. But when he has eaten his fill of this fine, immaterial provender, he is still left crying " I want, I want." What is it that he wants, and how and where is he to find it?

Through all the ages, in countless ways, the heart of man has been pursuing this elusive secret. It has had many names; and the places where it is supposed to be hidden have been called by many names, Avalon, Elysium, the Isles of the Blest, which lie " beyond the pomp of setting suns," and many another. The book of Job has a story to tell of this ancient quest: " The deep saith, It is not in me, and the sea saith, It is not in me." Neither was it to be found in the heavens, save by some path " which no fowl knoweth and the falcon's eye hath not seen." And when it was asked of Destruction and Death, all they could say was, " We have heard a rumor thereof." Francis Thompson tells of his search — how he sought the secret in the starry heavens, in human love, in the friendship of living nature, in the eyes of little children; but ended as he began, with empty hands. Men have traveled far on the road of knowledge; and our grand-

fathers were sure that science would uncover the secret. But today science is beginning to say, " It is not with me." The road of thought, much and long traveled, still ends in an unanswered question. Man is still crying, " I want, I want."

Now the church is not a select company marked off from a heedless and perverse race. It is the point at which the blind and confused " I want, I want " of mankind attains to articulate and ordered utterance. Here the ignorant aspiration of humanity, its childish " I want " has been purified and refined into prayer and worship. The prayers of the church are not its own private affair: they are the spearhead of the unceasing but unintelligent prayer of all flesh. St. Peter speaks of the church as a royal priesthood; and a priest is a kind of middleman, who appears for man before God. The church is the spokesman of all mankind, in its prayers and supplications making vocal the hunger and the thirst of a race. On behalf of all men, the church cries out, " I want, I want." It is the interpreter and the mouthpiece of the elemental longing of the heart of man. It is the world's priest and inter-

cessor before the throne of God. The church is the whole world on its knees, this restless world's uplifted hand. It takes upon itself the longing, the shame, the sorrow of a foolish and ignorant world and bears it in its intercessions before the God of all the earth.

But it is the claim of the church that it has heard the answer to the immemorial question of man. It is the spokesman of man before God; it claims to be also the mouthpiece of God in man. It has received, as we have seen, a revelation; and it is its office to declare it. If it is a royal priesthood, it is no less a royal prophethood. Over against the bleak negations of time, it utters the grand affirmative of eternity. Above all the silences, the scepticisms, the agnosticisms and despairs of earth, it sounds forth the everlasting *Yes* of God.

Now the service of the church to mankind is not to be measured by its own increase. That the church should annex souls to itself is indeed involved in its very task. But what it does for the world is not to be assessed by its own statistical advances. Its essential and particular serv-

ice is simply that it keeps the soul of the world alive. Despite its feebleness, it still keeps flying in the world the banner of a saving otherworldliness. It maintains and diffuses a spiritual view of life far beyond its own frontiers. It reminds the world that it cannot live by bread alone; and it keeps alive many a fair aspiration that would die but for the shelter that the church offers to it. What spiritual values the world recognizes, however faintly, are preserved from extinction by the life of the church in the world. Were the church to die, all those human pursuits which depend upon a faith in the reality of a spiritual universe, art, poetry, virtue, culture, would wane. Earl Balfour has, in a memorable passage in *The Foundations of Belief*, pointed out that those sceptical persons who profess to maintain their ethical ideals independently of religious support are parasites, sheltered and upheld by convictions which belong not to them but to the society of which they are a part. Their spiritual life is maintained by processes which they disown. That this indifferent and faithless world that we know does not fall apart is due

chiefly to that spiritual foundation upon which it rests, but which it does not recognize, and which was laid through long ages by the travail and patience and faith of the church of God.

In the church is made articulate the spiritual hunger of the world; and through the church is mediated that word which cometh forth from the mouth of God, which is bread for the world's hunger. It affirms the reality of man's spiritual striving and of its goal. And so it saves the world from being eaten up by secularity and materialism. It sets up

> " a mark of everlasting light
> Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,"

and keeps reminding men of an utterable spiritual destiny.

The Spirit of God is in all human aspiration. There can, indeed, be no aspiration, however faint, without some measure of inspiration. The native thirsts and hungers of mankind for some invisible good are the sign of the indwelling Spirit; and this attains its highest level in the church. But there deep answers to deep; and

aspiration is vindicated and justified by revelation. That is the church — it is the stage on which the Spirit of God brings man and God into touch with each other and keeps alive the life of the world. Without it, the world would slide through barbarism and animalism down to destruction.

5

The Conditions of Renewal

The church is not accomplishing its mission in the world in anything like the measure in which, on these premises, we should expect it to. And there is today a peculiarly urgent need that the church should seek renewal. The great missionary conference that gathered in 1929, in Jerusalem, after a survey of its problem, seems to have concluded that the challenge of Christianity to other religions and the resistance of other religions to Christianity are at the moment overshadowed by the menace which confronts all religions alike in the rising tide of secularity all over the world. It is not only this

faith or that, Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism or another, that is in jeopardy, but the religious view and conduct of life as a whole. Mankind seems to be drifting to the view that this world we see is all the world there is, that the unseen is a negligible fiction, and that the only gospel for men is the gospel of what with grim unconscious irony we call a "good time." I will not now pause to point out what the final consequences of a widespread secularization of life are bound to be. The observation which I would make with some confidence is that it is the business of the Christian church not merely to set up a barricade to stay this advancing worldliness, but to take the field like an army with banners and put it to rout.

Unfortunately, it is today in no position to take the field. Its divisions, its own confusion of mind about its business in the world, its uncertain gospel — these things paralyze it. A traveler who recently had occasion to spend a week-end in a city in western Canada reports that, upon seeking the counsel of a friend about a church in which he might profitably worship

on the Sunday evening, he was told, "There is only one church in the city at which you are *certain* to hear a Christian sermon tonight." No doubt, the matter was exaggerated; but even so, the incident reflects a grave contemporary condition. There is an increasing tendency to induce people to come to church by a policy of "special features." It is apparently assumed that the great matter is, by hook or crook, to fill the churches; and the church advertisements in the Saturday press reveal an immense industry in devising attractive baits in order to lure the idle and the curious into the church services.

Within the first few months of last year (1929), the writer received letters from two young ministers whose office-bearers were pressing on them the "special feature" policy. The churches around them were doing it, and they were reported to be drawing much people. But these two ministers rightly felt that it was a surrender to secularity, a lowering of the flag; and they wanted to be confirmed in their judgment. They were, of course, perfectly right. This tendency is a symptom of a loss of faith in

the power of the gospel, of a real if unacknowledged scepticism of the worth and necessity of common prayer and of the hearing of the word of God. The stunt is the thing — that, seemingly, is the new doctrine. And all this in the face of the ominous secularization of life on every hand. Nor is this the only symptom of declining faith and power in the church. If ever there was a condition that called for a Pentecost, this is assuredly it.

Now there have been renewals without number in the history of the church; and it might not be amiss to look at some of them.

The five or six centuries following the sack of Rome are rightly called the Dark Ages. It was a time of great corruption and degradation, with here and there a bright light that seemed only to accentuate the surrounding darkness. The first real and continuous break in that black night begins with the founding in A.D. 911 of the monastery at Cluny, with the intention of promoting a return to a stricter and more faithful observance of the Rule of St. Benedict. *The beginning of the redemption of Europe from the*

hell of the Dark Ages, was through a small company of men who banded themselves together for a common life of ordered prayer. The movement spread with great rapidity, and it was followed not only by a revival of religious interest but by new beginnings in education and art.

The Cluniac impulse ran low, after reaching its height about the beginning of the eleventh century. But towards the end of that century, there came another revival — and by the same path. *Companies of men joined themselves together to live an ordered life of devotion* — the Grandmontines in 1076, the Austin Canons in 1078, the Carthusians in 1084, culminating in a fresh revival of the Benedictine Rule in the Cistercian movement. And this revival brought with it an intense intellectual activity and was marked by a great advance in architecture.

The second revival had not spent its force before signs of still another became apparent. We hear of new groups of men seeking together a deeper, more ordered religious life — the Cruciferal in 1169, the Poor Men of Lyons in 1179, culminating in the Franciscan movement (1209)

and the Dominican (1216). Once more the procedure is the same. *The revival came through the effort of small companies of men to live in fellowship an ordered life of devotion and prayer.* Of this third revival, there were repercussions in the world of thought, science, politics and art; and its abiding monument is in the great Gothic churches which were begun at the time.

After this, there was as we know a great decline. The church became worldly and corrupt. But in the fourteenth century, we see signs of another uprising. *Small groups of devout men and women came together to cultivate the life of the Spirit.* Sometimes they formed communities; at other times, they lived their ordinary life in the world but came together regularly for meditation and prayer. Out of these movements came great things. One of these groups was the " Friends of God," among whom was John Tauler whose sermons deeply affected Martin Luther. Another was the " Brethren of the Common Life," which included Florentius of Deventer, and through him Thomas á Kempis, who

wrote *The Imitation of Christ.* It is generally acknowledged that such groups as these paved the way to the Protestant Reformation, which, whatever else it may have been, was a great revival of spiritual religion.

The beginnings of the Methodist revival and the evangelical movement of the eighteenth century are well known. They take us to *another small group that met for regular prayer and devotion* in Lincoln College, Oxford. Behind every general revival of spirituality, you will invariably find a small group or a number of small groups which have systematically and in fellowship sought the presence of God and have waited for his appearing. Here we have only given the merest epitome of the story — the whole tale would fill many books. But it will be observed that in every case, the beginning of a revival is true to type: and the prototype is Pentecost.

The moral is obvious, though it is difficult for us to learn it in these days of mass movements and mass production. We have some kind of notion that religion can be " promoted," just as

we may promote a business organization or a charity campaign. But we should have been warned against this fallacy long ago. "The Kingdom of Heaven cometh not with observation"—not with publicity and noise and the flourish of trumpets. What we have called "revivalism" would seem to be at most points at extreme antipodes from the New Testament view of the coming of the Kingdom. Most certainly, the revivals of religion that have left an abiding mark upon the course of religion and upon the life of the world have begun with a minimum of "promotion."

What you have to begin with is a company of people who devoutly desire to achieve a deeper spiritual life, who thereupon agree to live or to meet together regularly, submit themselves to a rule of life and prayer, and continue together in their common quest. They are not consciously looking for a revival of religion at large; they are concerned in the first instance only with the revival and reinforcement of religion in themselves. And once that has been achieved, it inevitably spreads beyond the original company

to those with whom its members have to do. It becomes a contagion from soul to soul. Generally, it brings forth a leader, as it brought forth St. Francis and John Wesley, who becomes its mouthpiece and interpreter. But the spring is the small company, which devotes itself to methodical and sustained prayer for the gift of the Spirit.

If the church is to have a renewal of life, it must begin with those who profoundly desire the renewal of their own lives and who will make common cause, in companies, in seeking the gift of the Spirit by ordered and sustained prayer, and who will go on doing so until they receive the gift. There are many such people in the church today; and they should have no difficulty in finding one another out, and then setting out together to seek a baptism of the Spirit.

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